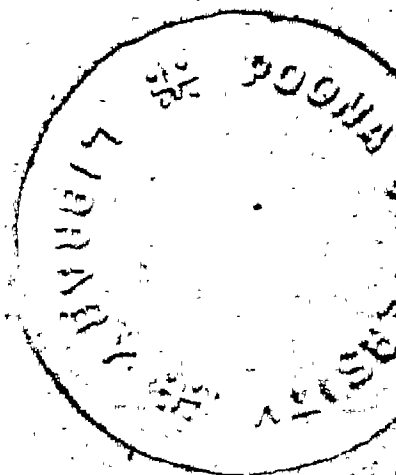


# CHATS WITH PIONEERS

OF

## MODERN THOUGHT.



BY

F. J. GOULD

*(Author of "A Concise History of Religion," "Tales from the New Testament," etc., etc.).*

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## PREFACE.

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SUCH people and such subjects! Libraries and reformers; books and propagandists; old editions and pioneers! To me the Muses granted this double pleasure: the pleasure of special and uninterrupted talks with emancipated men and women (I wish there had been more women), and the pleasure of handling and lingering over volumes which both they and I had learned to love. These conversations I, as Recording Angel, wrote down in the book of the *Literary Guide*. Even Recording Angels are subject to the laws of progress; and the reader will note that, as time went on, I acquired the knack of breaking up my paragraph-blocks into easier dialogue. In all cases I have sought to picture out the intellectual personality; I have avoided the trivial domestic details which have too often brought "interviewing" into disrepute. And so, in my note-book, posterity (if it so cares) may see how nineteenth-century reformers thought and talked on things intellectual, literary, and ethical, but will find nothing about favourite beverages, or the pattern of frocks.

I wish I could chat all the chats again with witty Momerie, brilliant Crozier, silver-penned Mrs. Lynn Linton, grand old Chartist Harney, thoughtful Miss Plumptre, strenuous George Jacob Holyoake, brave-spoken Foote, gentle Miss

Mathilde Blind (whose picturesque verse, alas ! was untimely cut short), liberal Picton, scholarly Wheeler, independent Voysey, eloquent Coit, anecdotal Conway, philosophical Coupland, charmingly metaphysical Mrs. Husband, idealistic Muirhead, studious Whittaker, and encyclopædic Robertson. Amiable Fate may permit me and the *Guide* to indulge in a second series of Chats. But they will not surpass the joys of the first.

*January, 1898.*

F. J. GOULD.



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# Chats with Pioneers of Modern Thought.

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## I.

### DR. A. W. MOMERIE.

AN environment of well-stocked book-shelves, with Professor Momerie in the opposite arm-chair to oneself, affords an ideal means of spending a pleasant Sunday afternoon. Such I spent one day in 1894. Dr. Momerie had much to say about Chicago and its graceful white Exhibition buildings, which formed an æsthetic island in the swamp of Chicago prose and vulgarity. Of course, we touched on the Parliament of Religions, at which the Doctor was a prominent speaker. I had a glimpse of Dr. Barrow's two volumes of records of the proceedings, enough to show me that the print was unpleasantly small. I questioned the Professor as to the culture and educational standing of the American clergy. They were broader-minded, he said, than the laity, and the average cleric reached a higher level than his English cousin. When I put the conundrum, why these well-informed American ministers produced so little of permanently valuable literature, Dr. Momerie was slightly puzzled, though I agreed with his suggestion that want of leisure partly accounted for the dearth of solid books. With enthusiasm the Professor praised the intelligence and amiability of American women (ought this remark to appear in a Literary Chat?). The men were commonplace, and absorbed in money-making. Even American women frankly said: "Our men are the most good and the least interesting in the world." No doubt there is a hint of caricature in this disparagement. But the Doctor has a little taste for caricature, even of himself. He cherishes some clever sketches in

which a friendly hand has drawn him in an unconventional flannel suit and soft white felt hat, disdainfully eyed by a stiff ecclesiastic who asks, "Are you a clerical brother?" or lecturing in a self-possessed fashion to a class of intellectual ladies. A cartoon represents him as trying to urge a stubborn horse, the Church, to leap a fence which divides it from the region of Progress.

Meanwhile the books were awaiting my examination. One corner of the study was sacred to the Philosophy of Religion, etc. There stood Jowett's Plato, Herbert Spencer, Lange (*History of Materialism*), Lotze, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Hegel, the Hegelian-minded Caird, and Fiske. There, too, was found Mr. A. Balfour's *Defence of Philosophic Doubt* ("which I have begun to read," observed Dr. Momerie, drily). Viscount Amberley's *Analysis of Religious Belief* was neighbour unto Greg's *Creed of Christendom*. The Professor told me how, when he was a curate in Lancashire, he and his vicar subscribed to Mudie's, and took care to let each other know what volumes they were about to take out for perusal, so as to avoid having the same. Dr. Momerie fixed on Greg. "We shan't clash there," exclaimed the vicar, with a tragic frown. Cotter Morison's *Service of Man* I noted. "A most suggestive book," said the unorthodox doctor, and he read me a sentence from a sermon of his on this very work: "So far as this world is concerned, so far as regards what is most fundamental in Christianity, Mr. Morison is at one with Christ." Three of Mr. Samuel Laing's books had an honourable place. One row was appropriated to Ethics—Macintosh, Bentham, Mill, Bain, Green (*Prolegomena*) Martineau (*Types of Ethical Theory*), Sidgwick, and the like. "A most remarkable man is Sidgwick," remarked the Professor; "there has been no such thorough-going 'Sceptic' since Socrates; absolutely indifferent to conclusions; like Plato, he often ends a discussion without proffering a result; he has a fine sentence, 'People have overestimated the importance of finding definitions, and underestimated the importance of seeking for them.'"

Then we crossed the room to a more or less historical section. The Hibbert Lectures elbowed Lecky and Buckle (one of my favourites, interposed the Doctor); and on the right of Baring-Gould (*Origin and Development*)

of *Religious Belief*), Tylor, John Morley ("rather dry," said the Professor), all Carlyle's works, an array of Proctor's and Clodd's books, several of the excellent International Scientific Series, Froude's *Short Studies*, a copious supply of *Foreign Classics for English Readers*, Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, etc. Mr. Holyoake's *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life* rested in the next press to several lives of Christ—Renan's, Geikie's, Strauss's *Ecce Homo*. Near by appeared the *Life and Teachings of Mohammed*, by Syed Ameer Ali, a writer who has done much to restore the original figure of Mohammed from the legends and dogmas of the later and corrupted Islam. Ameer Ali is a sort of Mohammedan Momerie, trying to work back to the ethics of the founder of his religion. A work on *The Oriental Christ* drew my attention. Its author, Mozoomdar, is a member of the Brahmo-somaj; and he, too, attempts to rescue the true Christ from the dogmas of the theologians. A book on *Dogma and the Church of England* is dedicated to Dr. Momerie by a former pupil. The writer (Fitzroy, I believe) traces a current of catholic and rational thought through such teachers as Sidney Smith, Arnold of Rugby, Milman, Kingsley, Robertson of Brighton, Colenso, Stanley, and the late Dr. Hatch.

To change the subject (how easy to change the subject in a library!), I was presently smiling over Horace Smith's *Tin Trumpet*, a witty dictionary which our Professor not unseeldom draws upon in his private or public discourse. It is in the *Tin Trumpet* that one meets an extraordinary definition of Celibacy—"a vow by which the priesthood swear to content themselves with the wives of other people."

Another step brought us to the Poets; Browning conspicuous. Whittier the Professor liked, but not Walt Whitman. *The Light of Asia* was a fine poem, which almost entitled Sir Edwin Arnold to the Laureateship; but *The Light of the World* spoiled the simplicity of the Gospel narrative with its limping blank verse. With certain reservations, the Doctor greatly liked Swinburne, and turned over the pages to the resounding *Hymn of Man*, of which the last line runs: "Glory to Man in the highest! for man is the master of things." Chiefly, the Professor was attracted by Swinburne's pæans over the decay of belief in the truculent Yahveh of the older Judaism and of Calvinism.

Then we wandered among the Novelists. All George Eliot's adorned the shelf (in how many ministerial libraries would one note such a fact?). A complete set of Balzac was evidently regarded as a treasure, and, below it, were ranged a line of paper-covered Frenchmen—Maupassant, Loti, and the rest. Half seriously, half jokingly, Dr. Momerie said: "Since the rise of Sarah Grand and the New Woman I have vowed a vow to read no more English novels. I can't stand the New Woman." *Robert Elsmere* the Professor pooh-poohed; he preferred Mrs. Deland's *John Ward, Preacher*; there was as much difference between these novels, he observed, as between Shakespeare and George Macdonald. A curiosity presented itself in Miss A. M. Rose's *The Preacher of St. Justin's*, the hero of which is a thinly-disguised Momerie. An Atheist figures in the tale, and he is an out-and-out good fellow. Tolstoi is not to the Doctor's taste.

The time had passed swiftly, and now we applied ourselves to a miscellaneous collection of Christian literature. And here be it solemnly noted that Dr. Momerie is in the habit of reading the profitable works of His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. At least, I am certain he has read and dogleaved the first chapter of the Archbishop's *Living Theology*. The rest of the leaves were uncut, but that was amply excused, by a murmured remark of the Professor's as to the pressure of other engagements. *Lux Mundi* he considered very unsatisfactory; Gore's chapter on "Inspiration" was slightly daring, but even that the writer was inclined to weaken by subsequent admissions. With unmistakable pleasure the Professor pointed to Dr. E. A. Abbott's *The Kernel and the Husk* and *Through Nature to Christ*. He also admired the writings of the American Theist, Savage, especially the sane argument for the existence of God contained in *Belief in God*—a title which is identical with that of a book by Dr. Momerie. A volume of Swedenborg's led the Professor to relate how, more than once, his sermons had pleased Swedenborgian hearers. Who would have suspected anything in common between the mystical engineer and the ex-Professor of King's College? The final item in our discursive talk was an edition of *The Teaching of the Twelve*—i.e., the Didache. In this early Jewish-Christian document Dr. Momerie felt great interest, since

its contents bore out his frequent contention that the primal Christianity laid the stress upon Conduct rather than Dogma, a great point in the Didache being the necessity of choice between a moral Way of Life and a Way of Death.

It may be mentioned, by the way, that Dr. Momerie places no sort of faith in the revolutionary theories of Professor Johnson's *Rise of Christendom*.

## II.

### DR. J. BEATTIE CROZIER.

To swim in the world's mighty stream of thought ; to ponder the great philosophies until his mind reflects, as from crystal facets, their form and essence ; to wrestle with mental problems until the tangle and the chaos are resolved into simplicity and lucidity : these are the delights of Dr. Crozier's soul. Amid the sombre or bright vicissitudes of his life this one desire, to master the secrets of the sages, has clung faithfully to him as Cordelia to Lear. In Canada his youth was nursed ; in England his activities blossomed into literature—the *Religion of the Future*, a Study of Lord Randolph Churchill, and the brilliant *Civilization and Progress*. His chief literary characteristics are picturesqueness of diction and catholicity of appreciation ; and hence flow the consequences—his pages never flag in interest, and his mental glance never narrows itself to one restricted area. The Organon which he unceasingly insists upon is, in effect, a perpetual wakefulness to all the relations of human nature. In the study of history the whole man must be kept in view—man physical, religious, moral, æsthetic.

Some few fragments of autobiography Dr. Crozier tossed into my note-book one evening, the graceful cigar-smoke meanwhile curling over our heads. A few abrupt phrases will tell a sufficient tale—Toronto University ; *furor scribendi* ; migration to London ; hard times ; St. Thomas's Hospital ; medical degree ; researches into heart disease ; struggling practice ; rich merchant with *Angina Pectoris* ; gratitude for relief given ; doctor and patient under one roof ; sudden death of merchant ; substantial legacy ; castles in the air ; medicine jilted ; divine philosophy courted ; fourteen translations of classics read in fourteen days ; hogs-heads of midnight oil ; overworked brain ; Romeo and Juliet ; marriage ; medicine restored to the throne ; West-

bourne Park practice for fifteen years; surgery and literature; books and bottles; pen and lancet; patients apply successfully to Dr. Crozier; Dr. Crozier applies unsuccessfully to editors of magazines; astonishing patience of wife, who reads volume after volume to the note-scribbling doctor; *Civilization and Progress*; fame; Government pension.

Yet Dr. Crozier declares he is not a literary man. When I saw his library I almost agreed with him. It was the most extraordinary scene in Westbourne Park. The Doctor himself laughed as he showed me the book-case; and I smile whenever I think of it. In one corner we began decorously with Hume and Merivale, and a row of Carlyles; then up started Ibsen; next Tolstoi; a work on dyspepsia elbowed Bellamy's *Looking Backward*; Emerson stood cheek by jowl with Page and Lapworth's *Geology*; Marlowe's plays were sandwiched between Montaigne's Essays and Histories of Philosophy by Lewes and Schwegler; Milton and Byron and Shelley appeared next; a Theosophist work on Hindu speculation, and Madame Blavatsky's *Key to Philosophy*, lent a mystic air to the shelf; Sydney Smith smiled at Scott, and Scott jostled up against the speeches of Lord Randolph Churchill. Then came a wild array—Adam Smith, the Fabian Essays, Carus's *Fundamental Problems*, Spencer's Synthetic Philosophy, Charles Lamb, Schäffle's *Quintessence of Socialism*, Addison's *Spectator*, Don Quixote, Molière, Thomas à Kempis, Tristram Shandy, Homer, Bacon, Dante, Coleridge, Swift, Poe, Burns, Tennyson (there was a gleam of method here), Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Beaumont and Fletcher, Gray, Beattie, Lowell, Longfellow, a treatise on billiards, *Diseases of the Nervous System*, Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, test-tubes, beakers, syringes, and the rest.

Nevertheless, when it comes to the composition of a book order is Dr. Crozier's first law. No reader can complain of obscurity or confusion in the Doctor's style and arguments. The scattered materials fall into the ranks, and the army of ideas marches on to the point of attack. A little table by the fireside was filled with volumes ready for digestion into a work now (1894) in the making—a book which will treat of religious origins and intellectual developments. There was no want of concatenation and consistency—the Christian Fathers, Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Renan, Gibbon,



Neander, Pressensé, Cardinal Newman. Any student will instinctively divine what ground here lies open for exploration and cultivation. Dr. Crozier's peculiar individuality will leave its deep indent in this yet uncompleted writing. The transitions which his own mind has travelled through will be mapped out in their devious route. There was one curious change in that inner experience. At Toronto the young man of nineteen knelt at the shrines of Mill and Buckle, and could only peruse Emerson and Carlyle and Paul's companions are said to have heard the voice near Damascus, hearing a voice but seeing no man, and no understanding the celestial utterance. Yet even Mill and Buckle did not subject the young student to such severe discipline as to prevent him dabbling in phrenology, and enjoying Ward Beecher's broad-thoughted sermons. And in the process of the years, and with the expansion of the brain and heart, the misty distances of history and politics and anthropology defined themselves into fascinating landscapes. Dr. Crozier's ambition was fired with an overpowering wish to unify the facts of the past and present in one perfect graduation. Darwin was the model; and just as he created a new order in the knowledge of the biological world, so Dr. Crozier hoped to display wide-governing principles in the intellectual and moral spheres. He has not feared, in his daring advance, to assail Herbert Spencer. In the great master's usage of the term, "Persistence of Force," Dr. Crozier asserts that there lurks a deceptive double meaning. Sometimes it is employed in the simple signification of the sum-total of force in the universe, which, though differing in form, is ever the same in amount, and sometimes it is used to denote a quite different thing—viz., the infinite and unknowable Absolute which *underlies* phenomena. This is what Dr. Crozier says. For my part, I forbear from wielding these heavy weapons.

From Spencer it was an easy step to Greek philosophy. We gave a flying word to Thales, and then rushed, as moths towards the candle, into the magic presence of Plato. Who does not feel a thrill when Plato rises before us, as the ghost of Samuel at the witch's call? Jowett bowed to the spell and even the school-boy, who cons a few lines of the *Dialogues*, knows something of the weird influence. The Doctor leaped to his feet, and, in a moment, was drawing

mystic diagrams across the table by way of explanation of Plato's philosophy. There were four main principles, he affirmed, and I listened and watched as, like a billiard player, he stepped from one point to another, and handled an invisible cue by way of emphasis. First, there was the underlying basis of all things, the formless, chaotic *Apeiron*. Second, the principle of Number, which gives outward form and shape to that which was before void and unseen. Third, the chain of ideas, which furnish the expression of qualities and reveal the inner nature and essence of things. Fourth, the Agathon, the Good, the final cause and goal, by which and for which all exists. But this system was, after all, but a splendid and elaborate statement of universal *statics*. Who was to promulgate the *dynamic* law by which all the varied scenes of the Cosmos came into being?

It was Aristotle, cried the Doctor, with a triumphant wave of the hand.

Aristotle preserved the Platonic doctrines, except that of Number, which he replaced by the principle of Motion; and he taught, instead, how the principle of Form was always passing into Matter, was ever rolling over from the depths of the non-existent into material creations and embodiments in Nature through natural law, and in Man working through habit and custom and precedent, each new step being based on the one immediately preceding it, and evolving naturally out of it.

Then the Stoics intervened in the great evolution, and across the background of the *Apeiron* spread the doctrines of God, the Logia, Destiny, and even Fire, all of which they used interchangeably as expressions of the Divine.

The next step brought the western world to Neo-Platonism, which utilized the theory of emanation, and interpreted the Platonic Ideas as emanations from the supreme Spirit. And when Christianity was born it was already fated to bear the stamp of Greek metaphysic.

One would have thought, as Dr. Crozier recited the story of the philosophic voyages of the human soul, that he was an enthusiastic metaphysician. By no means. With all the eagerness of a revolutionist he declares his object to be the expulsion of metaphysics from the science of nature and man. These ingenious methods of Kant and Hegel are but attempts to invent the perpetual-motion machine. Hegel,

with his polar principles of Being and Non-being—No being emerging into Being as the cosmic wheel revolved—ground out only the categories of the logical understanding but omitted all that gave colour and fervour to the finer intuitions of the soul. Other teachers came to our aid there, such as Emerson and Carlyle. To unify and unify Spencer's scientific doctrine of the Persistence of Force (in its legitimate sense) and natural evolution with the transcendental gospel of Goethe, Emerson, and Carlyle—that is I Crozier's daring purpose.

And so, in these airy realms, the Doctor and I took our meandering road, and trod the clouds and viewed the infinite deeps —

And with difficulty I caught the last train home!

### III.

#### MRS. E. LYNN LINTON.

NEAR the summit of a great pile of Mansions, and high above the multitudinous roofs and curling smoke-wreaths of Westminster, I found Mrs. Lynn Linton. In this ethereal region, and in the soft-carpeted bower of books and pictures which forms the famous novelist's study, I ought to have contentedly breathed the serene literary air, and steeped my soul in a spirit of acquiescence. Somehow or other, I had scarcely been ten minutes in Mrs. Linton's presence before I was contradicting her with such bluntness that I felt bound to apologize, and now again, in print, express contrition. Not that it much mattered ; for the lady is too amiable, and too much attached to freedom of thought and speech, to take offence at a straightforward statement of opinion. That is the striking thing about Mrs. Linton : she has so much of a Self in her—an individuality that, in contrast with many women whom one meets, stands out like a statue against the flat figures of a cheap chromo. But, as things do not come by chance, I wanted to know whence Mrs. Linton got this strain of independence in her blood. She could not say. Her father was an orthodox clergyman who had a horror of Unitarians ; her grandfather was a bishop ; and ministers numerous adorned the family history. Quite early she broke from the old theologic moorings, and has found her reward in storm and stress and abuse, brightly commingled with the respect and admiration of the saner sort of men and women. Through all the clatter and turmoil, one heart never failed in its loyal and tender encouragement—that of a brother. He died not many years ago. His portrait exhibits a splendid type of Englishman, big-bearded, broad-browed, honest-eyed, and makes just such a picture as one would like to hang up on the wall of a school and bid the lads take for model.

But about my contradicting Mrs. Lynn Linton. Educational problems agitate the air, and we easily fell to discussing them. Was it desirable to substitute rational moral training for the popular religious teaching? Mrs. Linton did not see that morality was an expansible factor of civilization. Was our virtue greater than that of the Greeks? Did our courage surpass that of the heroes of Thermopylæ? These insipid modern days only now and then produced splendid imitations of the classic spirit, such as the death of the troops on the *Birkenhead* who went down into the sea with their eyes on the saved women and children, or the valiant stand of Wilson against the swarming Matabele.

It occurred to me that Mrs. Linton's enthusiasm betrayed the novelist's bias towards the picturesque. We could not, I suggested, tread the deck of a *Birkenhead* every day, or make defences against desperate odds of war; was it, therefore, not well to teach children the heroism of doing faithfully the daily task? Mrs. Linton willingly assented, adding that the ideal morality lay in following the way of self-respect and the leading of honour: to which I rejoined with a quotation from the closing lines of one of her early novels (*Amymone*, written in 1848): "Thus fail all who sacrifice good and virtue to gain the applause of the world, and who hold men's opinions higher than their own inward consciousness of right."

And yet Mrs. Linton contended that the vulgar mass, the *plebs*, could not apprehend a reasoned morality, and were well enough suited with the motives supplied by the hope of Heaven and the fear of Hell. The Agnostic view was good only for the educated.

It was at this point I was driven to protest; and I hastened to tell Mrs. Linton how the Ethical Movement, in which the faith of the new Rationalism centred, went on the principle that even the common folk could be persuaded into the path of uprightness by appeal to reason and practical good sense.

After all, the question is one of policy and expediency: There can be no doubt as to Mrs. Linton's whole-hearted adhesion to the gospel of rational ethics. Witness such passages as these (I take them from *Freeshooting*, an excellent selection of extracts from Mrs. Linton's writings): "Modern Christianity is a string of errors founded on part

falsehood, part misapprehension; the Bible history a conglomeration of myths; the influence of the Church the consolidation of intellectual darkness; belief without proof is folly; and faith, as opposed to reason, the superstition of savages and children; the highest duty of man is that which he owes to the community; his bravest act of spiritual manliness the confession of his spiritual ignorance." And again: "The manly modesty of Agnosticism, which knows nothing save the obligation of active well-doing."

Mrs. Linton admitted that time had mellowed the political rebelliousness of her earlier years with a sober conservatism. She made me laugh at the shudder with which she told how once she was on the brink of becoming a member of the anarchic and subversive "International." On one point, however, Mrs. Linton never forswears her old opinion. Always, by day and by night, up hill and down dale, she pursues with ruthless criticism the phantom of the New Woman. I hope these flagellations will as certainly result in the due edification of our revolted sisters as they help to amuse the by-standing world. Mrs. Linton lets the men off lightly, whereat we may well be glad; for her swift and exquisitely-fashioned satire cuts like a shaft from Apollo's bow. Yet the chastisement is inflicted without malice. At the end of her interesting volume of essays on *Ourselves* there is a charitable little foot-note which declares with terse significance: "I am not intolerant where I disapprove, and I am not the enemy of my own sex because their censor." Perhaps the New Women would snort defiance less loudly at Mrs. Linton if they knew how often and how good-naturedly she has plodded through the chaotic manuscripts of would-be authors and authoresses, and corrected, with the patience of a schoolmistress, their slipshod English, often mis-spelt and always ungrammatical. All the same, the would-be authors and authoresses ought to temper their ambition with mercy towards a very hard-worked lady. Could they not invent a less stringent test of her ethical temper?

Well, but I am forgetting that I went to see Mrs. Linton's library. Her books are shelved in three separate rooms. One capacious press holds all her own works. It is a prolific list, from *Azeth the Egyptian* in 1848 to the three-volumed *The One too Many* of 1894. From the very first the

novelist attained distinction of style—chaste, strong, vivid. Where she learned it from I could not discover. An admiration for Edward Gibbon would hardly account for it. One characteristic of Mrs. Linton's library I soon discerned—it was evidently a workshop. A crowd of reference books told how carefully facts and phrases and allusions were verified—Southey's *Commonplace Book*, Chambers's *Book of Days*, *Familiar Quotations*, Lemprière's and Smith's classical dictionaries, a Thesaurus, the *English Cyclopædia*, a set of Meyer's Conversations-Lexicon, and a long line of portly volumes of the *Encyclopædia Londinensis*; the original cost of the latter being £100, though of course its glory has long since paled before the brilliance of the *Britannica*. Starting up in all sorts of unexpected corners I met with books on botany, a subject Mrs. Linton has always been fond of. Of scientific and philosophic works there was plentiful store—an imposing regiment of volumes of *Nature*, dating from the first issue; Ure's *Dictionary of the Arts*; the works of Spencer, Darwin, Tyndall, and Huxley; Drummond's *Ascent of Man* (you should have seen the scorn that gleamed in Mrs. Linton's eyes as she pointed out this book of plausibilities); a good selection from the ever-welcome "International Scientific Series;" Haeckel's *Evolution of Man*; Bain's *Mental and Moral Science*; Harriet Martineau's abridgement of Comte, etc. One could see here an evidence of Mrs. Linton's habit of precise thinking and diction. I should doubt if many women-novelists, or even New Women, could display on their shelves an equally useful collection of scientific treatises.

Of poets there was the accustomed parade; and I ascertained that, despite the persecutions of would-be authoresses, Mrs. Linton contrived to snatch odd moments in which to memorize long pieces of poetry—*inter alia*, some of Rudyard Kipling's most powerful pieces. She says, laughingly, that she could repeat poetry for five hours on end; and among her most intimate friends she is known for her skill in dramatic recitation.

General literature was amply represented—Lane's *Arabian Nights*, Froissart's *Chronicles*, Montaigne (a favourite is old Montaigne), Rabelais, Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* (5 vols., 1826), Coleridge's *Literary Remains*, a copious supply of Bohn's editions of classical authors, Macaulay,



Wilkinson's *Ancient Egyptians* (a source utilized in *Azeth*), a liberal sprinkling of the great British novelists, etc., etc. A fine edition of Balzac was bound in leather. At one time Mrs. Linton could have described, if called upon, any figure in the whole gallery of Balzac's characters.

Naturally I kept an open eye for the champions of Rationalism, and they were admirably conspicuous—a splendid edition of Voltaire's *Œuvres Complètes* (12 vols., 1855), Lecky's *History of Rationalism*, Gibbon, De Wette (he looks ancient now-a-days), F. Newman's *Hebrew Monarchy*, Theodore Parker's *Atheism, Theism, and the Popular Theology*, Channing, Combe, Strauss, Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, Cotter Morison's *Service of Man*, Frederic Harrison's *Calendar of Great Men* (a most acceptable companion for Agnostic readers), Frazer's *Golden Bough* (I was glad to find Mrs. Linton appreciated this beautiful piece of research), all Mr. Samuel Laing's books, Amberley's *Analysis of Religious Belief*, etc. In one niche there lurked a suspicious company of Spiritualistic works. With a sigh of relief I heard that Mrs. Linton felt no temptation to listen with awe to the tattooing of spirits on mahogany tables. One or two orthodox specimens, such as Westcott's *Revelation of the Risen Lord*, had crept into the shelves as gifts from her proselytizing friends; but stray books, like stray cats, are difficult to keep out of the house.

From the books of great writers I turned to look at their faces, as cherished in Mrs. Linton's album—Carlyle, Greg, Tyndall, Huxley, G. H. Lewes, Bastian (of *Spontaneous Generation* renown), Joachim Miller, Dickens, Hepworth Dixon, and others, all known personally. As the album closed, my eye caught sight again of the great City outside, and Big Ben struck the bell of noon; and I repented that I had robbed my hostess of more than an hour of precious time. I avoid gilded compliments, and simply say that I shall always number, among my pleasantest reminiscences, my meeting with Mrs. E. Lynn Linton.



## MR. GEORGE JULIAN HARNEY.

ONE tempestuous day in August, 1821, visitors brought news to a house in Deptford of exciting scenes which had just occurred in London. Broken-hearted Queen Caroline's funeral procession, rendered yet more melancholy by torrents of rain, had passed from Hammersmith through the City on its way to Harwich. The authorities had endeavoured to deflect the *cortège* northwards. A great mob of Londoners willed otherwise. In Piccadilly angry feeling had blazed out into a conflict with the soldiers. Shots were fired, and several citizens were killed. This news was eagerly caught up by a small child, not then five years old. Some hours afterwards his mother found him lying awake in bed, thinking and wondering.

From 1821 to 1895 is a long span. In 1895 the child still lives to tell of this and many other old-time reminiscences. When I sat the other evening\* at Mr. Julian Harney's fireside, drinking in these stories of a long-past day from the lips of my silver-bearded host, I thought I was learning history in the most agreeable mode. To listen to the eye- and ear-witness teaches one more than the brilliant historical essay. Next to the living voice one should value contemporary pamphlets and broadsheets. Mr. Harney possesses a curious volume made up of political squibs issued in the period just referred to. One of them is Hone's spirited *House that Jack Built*. Its woodcuts were political blasphemies—one shows the Janus-like clerical magistrate, the right face gazing at the gallows, the left at the Cross; another images the old dandy, George IV., whose head-dress is ridiculously surmounted by peacocks'

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feathers. A picture of the old-fashioned hand-worked printing-press evokes a note of wild defiance:—

“ This is the thing  
That, in spite of new Acts,  
And attempts to restrain it  
By soldiers or tax,  
Will poison the vermin  
That plunder the wealth  
That lay in the house  
That Jack built.”

In 1833 the lad Harney knew a Radical shoemaker (somebody ought to write a history of Radical shoemakers) who took in the *Poor Man's Guardian*. This unstamped, rebellious sheet was published by Henry Hetherington, and was edited by Bronterre O'Brien. It probably did more than anything else to effect the removal of the newspaper-stamp folly. At one time or another some five hundred persons were imprisoned for selling the *Guardian*. Among these political Huguenots, to whose memory be all honour, was George Julian Harney. The air was heavy with social disquiet and suspicion. Across the ragged clouds blazed exaggerated hopes and expectations. An heroic spirit surged in the artizan heart. If the oppression had been more daring, the oppressed would have risen to the heights of martyrdom.

From Derby Gaol Harney made his first essay in print in the *Political Register*, not Cobbett's famous organ, but a later namesake. His next venture was an appeal in the *London Mercury* on behalf of Gale Jones and Preston, two veteran Radicals who had fallen on evil times. One day he received a mysterious parcel. It contained two £5 notes, two black silk neckerchiefs, and a packet of Owenite and St. Simonian tracts. The notes and neckerchiefs duly gladdened the eyes of the old democrats. Jones had belonged to the English Jacobin group; and Preston had been an associate of Thistlewood, but was guiltless of any share in the Cato Street conspiracy. Thus generously did the young champion of freedom exert himself for the solace of grey-haired warriors in the army of Liberty. Harney stayed six months in Derby prison; but he had previously undergone two terms of shorter duration for the same splendid crime of struggling to unshackle the popular press.

Of course the portentous Chartist movement swept Harney into its current of dreams and passions. The men of the Six Points met, in 1839, at the British Coffee House, Cockspur Street. (Not long afterwards they shifted their headquarters to Dr. Johnson's Tavern, Bolt Court, Fleet Street.) Mr. Harney showed me an old print of this National Convention. One sees a plain, unadorned apartment alive with strenuous figures who represent the fervour and aspirations of the poor millions. The interested eye passes from Feargus O'Connor to Frost, Lovett, O'Brien, Sankey of Edinburgh, Dr. Taylor, etc. And there stands George Julian Harney, endowed by an imaginative artist with a pair of truculent black eyes. More true to nature was the moustache which bristled on the young Chartist's lip. Harney was the youngest member of the Convention.

With the dash and abandonment of a Berserker, Mr. Harney flung himself into the medley and whirl of the social agitation which culminated in 1848. At the British Museum I have looked over old files of the newspapers from which, as from a phonograph, issue tones of alarm, wrath, entreaty, protestation, revolt; and not the least resolute voice is that of Julian Harney. It is not for us younger men, who tread a road made easier by the toils of the Chartists, to carelessly criticise the eager indignation of these faded pages of the *London Democrat*, the *Democratic Review*, or the *Vanguard*. Sacred always is enthusiasm for the social weal. Mr. Harney's best energy was spent in the columns of the *Northern Star*, the captain of the Chartist organs. He became sub-editor of this famous paper of Feargus O'Connor's in 1843. Subsequently he was raised to the editorial chair. Mr. Harney was too hot-blooded in espousing the cause of the Continental Republicans—for there were giants in those days, when Kossuth, Mazzini, Ledru Rollin, Louis Blanc, and other splendid souls dedicated themselves to Liberty—and O'Connor and his editor parted company.

This is not a political sketch, but two incidents of Mr. Julian Harney's Chartist career may claim the merest mention—his defence at the great State trial at Lancaster in 1843, when he captained the political defendants, who declined the aid of barristers, and themselves pleaded for the cause dear to their hearts; and his contest with

Palmerston for the representation of Tiverton in July, 1847, a contest still keenly remembered in the West of England and the country generally.

Mr. Harney carried the war into Jersey, where he lived for eight years. His sojourn there was enlivened by two libel actions which sprang out of his dauntless attacks on the feudal claims of the "seigneurs," and a newspaper duel between his *Jersey Independent* and a paper run in the landlord interest. The editor of this latter choice periodical accused Mr. Harney of an unholy acquaintance with Taylor of the renowned *Diegesis*. As a matter of fact, the Dr. Taylor of the Convention had no connection with the so-called "Devil's Chaplain." Turning the tables, Mr. Harney applied the obnoxious designation to his antagonist. The counter-move caught on, for said antagonist was an "unemployed Reverend" aspiring to the episcopal supremacy of the Channel Islands, the Bishopric to be carved out of the see of Winchester. That ambitious dream was fated not to be realized; but the title, style, and dignity conferred by Mr. Harney stuck to the cleric to the day of his death.

From 1863 to 1878 Mr. Harney found a home in America, and since '78 he has several times crossed the water. When, in 1873, Mr. Bradlaugh paid his first visit to America, he viewed the chief points of interest in Boston under the guidance of Wendell Phillips and Mr. Harney.

For several years past Mr. Harney has been engaged in educational work, and many thousands of pupils have availed themselves of the advantage of his tuition. I speak, however, in the language of riddles. The educational work is literary criticism, and the multitudinous pupils are the readers of the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*. Who that has read Mr. Harney's entertaining columns week by week, enjoyed the genial wit with gay appreciation, and felt grateful for much instruction, would have imagined that the writer's hand was oft-times racked with pain, and the brain weary with sleepless watching of the hours of night? His pen is dipped in perennial cheerfulness. Not unseldom the books reviewed are dull—but the reviewer, never. Infinite is his wealth of poetic quotation. Couplets and stanzas scatter their metric beauty over his manuscript as readily as the tears which fell from Dick Swiveller's pepper-

castor. In print or in private correspondence it is all the same; always one meets the happy quotation. And when I took a copy of Byron down from Mr. Harney's shelves, and read aloud a random line that caught my fancy, the veteran journalist nimbly interposed and recited the rest of the verse. Byron, indeed, is his favourite poet.

Even more interesting to me than Mr. Harney's books were the pictures that covered the walls of his cosy sitting-room. They were mostly portraits. Among them I noted the face of W. J. Linton, the renowned engraver, his handsome face much resembling Longfellow's. Nigh thereunto was Victor Hugo; Mr. Harney remembers him very well. When the Chartist lived in Jersey, Hugo dwelt as an exile in Guernsey; and the editor of the *Independent* manfully defended the illustrious exile against the assaults of traducers; for even in the Channel Islands Hugo had enemies. Then there was J. R. Stephens, the "Methodist fire-brand" of the Chartist movement. Another social reformer was Richard Oastler, advocate of the ten-hours limit to the unnatural toil of factory children. Three heroic men formed one noble group—Kosciusko, Kossuth, Mazzini; the two latter Mr. Harney knew personally. Near the portrait of Kosciusko hung a darkly suggestive engraving of the massacre of Poles in 1861. From these Continental champions of freedom one turned to a fine English type, represented in a medallion of William Cobbett, attached to it being an autograph note from Cobbett. This letter, however, breathes no political fire; it is, to say sooth, an invitation to dinner! Yet not altogether unromantic was this invitation. It was proffered to an Irish barrister, who had undergone fine and imprisonment for exposing the iniquities of Castlereagh's rule in Ireland. Next to Cobbett's medallion appeared the features of a lady—Miss Eleanor Cobbett, daughter of William; she still lives, writing occasionally to Mr. Harney, and lightly bears her ninety years. Presently I stopped before the face of Frederick Engels, the translator of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*. Though not a Socialist nor believing in the Socialist plan of human regeneration, Mr. Harney enjoyed the friendship of Karl Marx from 1848, and has known Engels for a still longer term. Of course Byron's picture had a place in the little gallery. Three notable women, too—Mary Wolstonecraft,

Madame de Staël, and Constance Naden. Of modern English worthies great examples were furnished by Ruskin, Darwin, and Tyndall. These were neighbours to Julius Cæsar. And a foot or two beyond—how drolly pictures intermingle, and sublimity and bathos, and grave things and trifles—I came across “Uncle Toby and the Widow.”

“He will never find the speck in her eye,” said Mr. Harney.

Photographs of Mr. Joseph Cowen and members of his family naturally reminded one of Newcastle and of the *Chronicle*.

Numbered among the treasures was a little box which, when reverently opened, disclosed a handful of mould, taken from the memorial mound to Kosciusko at Cracow. Only a little red earth—sanctified, however, by the spirit of loyal admiration which preserves it. For these are the great riches of human life—devotion to ideals, and faith in the advance of right, and love for the brave dead. And, as adding to the moral wealth of the world, let Kosciusko and the Poles be solemnly saluted. Let the Chartists also receive their meed of honour.

## MISS CONSTANCE E. PLUMPTRE.

ROME. All roads lead to Rome, where St. Peter's is consecrated to orthodoxy, and where Giordano Bruno died for heresy in 1600. And scarcely had I seated myself in Miss Plumptre's cheerful drawing-room when the conversation turned to Rome. One could easily detect in her description of scenes and incidents in the wondrous City, which Miss Plumptre visited not long since, the thrill of intense interest and fascination. She had done what every Rationalist would probably do in like circumstances—found her way to the Campo dei Fiori. A squalid quarter is the Campo, though well enough known to the chatty cabman who conveyed Miss Plumptre to the spot made holy by the martyrdom of Bruno, and now adorned by the artistic monument from the hand of Ettore Ferrari. It pleased both my hostess and myself to talk of the author of the *Heroic Enthusiasm*. Some years ago I dedicated to his memory a few modest but reverent pages. Miss Plumptre had been before me in the remote but charming vineyard of Bruno's mystic philosophy. In 1884 she published (through Chapman & Hall) two volumes entitled *Giordano Bruno: A Tale of the Sixteenth Century*. The work gave, so to speak, an enlarged, coloured, and slightly-idealized photograph of the great Italian. All the ascertained facts of his career are exposed with sufficient interweaving of fiction to render the story of his life eminently readable. There is no doubt that Bruno's career, if detailed records had been handed down, would in itself have presented ample elements of romance. But the facts have dribbled out meagrely and precariously, and Miss Plumptre's skill has imparted the vividness and actuality of life to the history of Bruno's unique struggles, speculations, and adventures.



From Bruno the devious way of speech led us into the modern conflict of Individualism and Socialism. Miss Plumptre is an Individualist. I, who am neither Socialist nor Individualist, argued with her from point to point, catching the impression, at each turn of our friendly debate, of a clear, rational, disciplined mind—and yet, even with its emphasis and insistence, altogether feminine in its regardful attitude and amiable avoidance of harsh phrase. A type of mind, this, rare among women just now; but the work and effort of ladies like Miss Plumptre will hasten the day when intellectual expansion will not be excluded from the womanly graces. In the world of thought Miss Plumptre divides her incense between the shrines of Bruno and Herbert Spencer. Quite Spencerian is her persistent urging of the reign of law in all social phenomena, and her abhorrence of a false philanthropy which would nourish unfit forms of the human species. Self-help, self-control, self-development—these are her texts; and she condemns the Socialism which would tax thrift for the comfort of lazy incompetence. When I somewhat resentfully asked if she had not a word of censure for the idle rich, Miss Plumptre gave answer:—

“Much as I dislike an idle and worthless aristocracy, I view with still greater dread a thriftless and lazy democracy, because of the superiority of its numbers. Towards such a democracy, unless I greatly mistake, Socialism and the pseudo-philanthropy so fashionable just now are tending.”

Yet Miss Plumptre earnestly disclaimed (and I believed her) any callousness to the sufferings of the poor. But, so far as those ills were not remediable by self-improvement, the best aid was that which came through the channel of private effort. State aid was applied to masses—a fact which rendered it impossible to discern in which cases the assistance did good or harm.

The precise, penetrating Spencerian ring is noticeable in Miss Plumptre's book on *Natural Causation* (published by Fisher Unwin in 1888). I may briefly advert to the leading subjects of the four essays grouped in that volume. (1) The doctrine of design is criticised; and yet, as regards the origin of things, no dogmatism is ventured; and matter is “reverenced as something past finding out, in which is latent, not only every form of body, but every form of mind;”



and evolution is held up as the only reasonable rule of life and history. (2) Philosophic Necessity; the drift of which dissertation may be readily caught in the writer's advice that children should be taught how, "by early application and restraint, they may be largely creators of their own future, not from the spontaneous interference of an uncaused entity, *Free-will*, but from the necessary law of cause and effect." (3) Natural growth in ethics. The progress of morals is sketched from primitive crudeness to the gentler manners of to-day; conscience and its dictates will some day be unneeded, when the ethical temper becomes part and parcel of human nature; much is expected from the selective power of carefully-controlled heredity. (4) Natural growth of civilization—a topic which leads up to a characteristic deprecation of State interference in education, etc.

And, since I have made mention of two of Miss Plumptre's writings, I may as well complete the list.

An Agnostic now, as deeming that man, the creature of an hour, cannot comprehend the beginning and end of things, Miss Plumptre was, in earlier years, attracted to Pantheism; and her pen faithfully served that creed in a two-volumed *History of Pantheism* (1878–1879), issued anonymously. Through the Hindu mystics, the Greek speculators, onwards to Bruno, Spinoza, Fichte, Hegel, etc., the line of Pantheistic thought is traced. The style is lucid, crystalline, uniformly dignified. A labour of love, evidently, was the task of composition. Yet the authoress shrank from quite subscribing to the doctrine whose growth she portrayed. One notable remark from the concluding page I particularly desire to quote: "It has long been the reproach of Pantheism that it is liable to confusé Evil with Good. That such is not the intention of this book need scarcely be said. Better a hundred times have intellectual doubts concerning the nature of God—nay, better even to disbelieve in him altogether, than for a moment to lose our loathing and aversion to sin."

Of these chief products of Miss Plumptre's literary activity her magazine articles are naturally reflections. In the *Westminster Review*, *Liberty Review*, *Agnostic Annual*, and other advanced publications, she has issued articles on Bruno, Vanini, Bradlaugh, Liberty of Action and Opinion. A curious digression from this routine of study led to an

article in the *Morning Post* on the last English census. Some readers of the *Literary Guide* may remember that, three or four years ago, Dr. Lewins threw doubt upon the martyrdom of Bruno, and attention was then drawn to Miss Plumptre's paper in the *Antiquary* (March and April, 1889) which gave an ably-reasoned reply to the scepticism of a writer in the *Scottish Review*. This unbelieving reviewer had even tried to belittle Bruno into a wily Neapolitan humbug. Miss Plumptre's rejoinder crushed the doubter with facts, and was none the less effective because it glowed with indignation at the animus of the sneerer. Among other tokens of her interest in the higher spheres of thought may be mentioned papers read before the Aristotelian Society on the rise and development of philosophy during the period of the Renaissance, and on Vanini, etc.

Here let me interpolate a practical note on the Woman problem. It helps towards the solution of the *quæstio vexata* far better than a brilliant article in a magazine. Miss Plumptre kept house for her father and brother (till the former died in 1887, and the latter married) from the time she was seventeen.

"I think," she added, after telling me this, "that a woman, so long as she has home duties thrust upon her, should look upon the efficient performance of these duties as her highest aim and highest happiness. And wherever (which, with a little management, will not be often) the duties of the domestic life clash with those of the intellectual, the domestic should always take precedence."

There lies the matter in a nutshell. Miss Plumptre kept house, and yet wrote excellent books.

Of course my visit to Miss Plumptre included an inspection of her books. Merely from the æsthetic point of view, one likes to see a lady's library and its impressive order. Miss Plumptre's books resembled the Guards on parade. Farr's *Vital Statistics* reminded me of the article on the "English Census." Miss Plumptre knew the late Dr. Farr personally. A mind that loves the statistical, the exact, and the definite was suggested also by the presence of such works as Fawcett's *Pauperism* ("an admirably-written work," said my hostess; "the principles of which apply to all our present social difficulties") and Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Mr. Bradlaugh's *Speeches* and *Labour and Law*

were accorded an honoured place, as highly useful in themselves, and as memorials of a great character, honourable in his life and achievements. Dr. Willis's *Servetus and Calvin* took the mind back to an episode in the history of religion and civilization which bears pregnant lessons; and the same author's work on Spinoza was evidently an endeared companion of the authoress of the *History of Pantheism*. One could have guessed, without being told, that her logical temperament would have vibrated to the lofty music of the ethics of the God-intoxicated Hebrew. Naturally one came across Descartes, the gifted advocate of clear thinking and patient verification; and Locke, a prince among English philosophers. The pungent Heine had a niche; and a catholic liberality found room on the shelves for Cardinal Newman's *Apologia*, and for (as I think) his no less noble brother's *Phases of Faith*. With pleasure, too, the eye lit upon the works of the brilliant Froude and the sweetly reasonable Matthew Arnold. All John Stuart Mill's books were to be seen, including the Autobiography. It is singularly fitting that a lady's bibliotheca should show reverence for one who fought so actively against the subjection of women. Other splendid figures in the line of modern advanced thought were recalled by their works—the eloquent Clifford; Henry Thomas Buckle, in whose unfinished *History of Civilization* so deep a pathos lurks; picturesque Draper; and the learned and elegant Lecky. Not many libraries can boast, as Miss Plumptre's can, of a copy of Erasmus Darwin's writings, though, even with my eyes shut, I could have sworn that his famous grandson's *Origin of Species* was somewhere in the room. And there, also, was Haeckel; and the luminous Huxley, popularizer of science and dread antagonist of theologians in high places; and Tyndall, fascinating expounder of scientific marvels. Of novels the array was slender—I only remember George Eliot; and space was found for a little work which Rationalists should not allow to drop into oblivion—Mrs. Lynn Linton's *Joshua Davidson*. Always welcome of aspect are volumes from the “English Men of Letters” and the “International Scientific Series.”

My highest interest was excited by three time-worn tomes. One was an English translation, dated 1764, of Voltaire's treatise on Toleration “occasioned by the execution of the

unfortunate Calas." This particular edition, therefore, appeared fourteen years before Voltaire's death. The other two related to Vanini. *La vie et les sentiments de Lucilio Vanini* was published at Rotterdam in 1717. Not many people in the world are happy possessors of a book by Vanini printed during his lifetime. Miss Plumptre enjoys that pleasure. Her copy bears the inscription on the inside of the cover, "Liber rarissimus," written in a moment of rapture by some bibliophile a generation or two ago. The full title runs: *Amphitheatrum Aeternæ Providentiæ Divino Magicum Christiano-Physicum—Astrologico-Catholicum, adverses veteres Philosophos, Atheos, Epicureos, Peripateticos, Stoicos, etc.* It was issued at Lyons in 1615, four years before a mob at Toulouse, on a February day, watched the Christian executioner seize Vanini's tongue with pincers and cut it off! The *Amphitheatre* is, on the whole, fairly orthodox; it was a succeeding work, the *Dialogues*, which brought Vanini to the stake.

This relic of the martyr I could scarcely regard without emotion. Glad, indeed, I felt that I had not discovered it on the shelf of a mercenary bookseller, intent on extracting a good price for a bargain. It is well that the venerable book should have fallen into the keeping of one who has devoted a well-trained mind, an able pen, and a sympathetic heart to a worthy record and interpretation of such strugglers after light as Bruno and Vanini.

## GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE, S.M.

LITERATURE early claimed George Jacob Holyoake for her own. In 1836 he edified his native country, or, at least, that part of it which read the *Baptist Tract Magazine*, with a poem in four stanzas, of which the following was the last:—

“ By all the glories of the sky  
Of mortals yet unknown,  
And by the worm that ne’er shall die,  
The fires that always burn ;  
By all that’s awful and sublime,  
Ye sons of men, improve your time.”

These lines may be described as tendering the best possible advice based on the worst possible reasons. The good advice Mr. Holyoake still lives to impress upon the sons of men in his own inimitable and persuasive mode. The theology of the worm he had abandoned by 1842. That year saw him plunged into the rushing tide of social reform, and of the intellectual and ethical Protestantism which is known as Freethought. It was in 1842 that he published his first pamphlet on *The Advantages and Disadvantages of Trade Unions*. The title-page announced him as “G. J. Holyoake, S.M.”—the “S.M.” standing for Social Missionary. Two generations have passed, and he is still “S.M.” In the same year, 1842, he was immured in Gloucester Gaol for the utterance of blasphemy. Very grotesque sounds a paragraph from the *Cheltenham Chronicle* (quoted in the *Oracle of Reason*, June, 1842): “On Tuesday evening last a person, named Holyoake, from Manchester, delivered a lecture on Socialism (or, as it has been more appropriately termed, Devilism) at the Mechanics’ Institution.....We have three persons [adds the editor in a note to the report] in our employ who are ready to verify on oath the correctness of the above statements. We therefore

hope those in authority will not suffer the matter to rest here, but that some steps will immediately be taken to prevent any further publicity to such diabolical sentiments." Pious Christian feet took the steps. The young heretic, during the week preceding his trial, would often pace the solemn cloisters of Gloucester Cathedral; and a photograph of the pillared walk is preserved by Mr. Holyoake as a reminiscence of that fateful period. I wish I could tell again here all the absorbing narrative of the trial, and the seven months' imprisonment, as I heard it from the master's own lips. The star he followed then he still pursues with uplifted eyes. Amid jostling crowds and the hum of cities and the stir of great events he has ever linked hands with warriors for light and liberty. In one aspect alone he has changed: he has learned to treat sincerity with respect, even if it assume a Christian and obscurantist guise. In the happy years to come Christians will have schooled themselves into a similar charity towards the Agnostic.

In Mr. Holyoake's pleasant Brighton house (the upper windows overlook the Channel) the walls repeat history, the corners whisper eloquently of the past, and the shelves testify of achievement and hope. The door opens, and one is immediately confronted with the features of Mr. J. A. Roebuck, limned by the strong pencil of "Ape." A few inches distant one beholds the massive head of Colonel Ingersoll. Another step, and there is Joseph Cowen. And then the glance falls upon a caricature, from an American paper, of the British Lion costumed as a furious bravo, ready, in a fit of Jingoism, to defy uncounted foes; and the skit is a ready reminder of the fact that Mr. Holyoake invented the apt nickname of the "Jingoes."

I passed from room to room, looking now at sketch and engraving, and then at the Father of Secularism, as he commented with sparkling humour and copious anecdote. Here are some of my pictorial recollections:—The noble features of Orsini, whose portrait I had never seen before; and this grand head came to the guillotine! Mazzini, the apostle of whom Mr. Holyoake speaks with endless affection, and who, as I learned, acquired a singularly exact knowledge of the British temperament and idiosyncrasies—a rare gift among the continentals. Garibaldi, in two pictures; the smaller, a photograph, inscribed with a greeting to Mr.

Holyoake in the hero's own handwriting. Harriet Martineau in middle-life, an age when, as Mr. Holyoake well observed, her face grew queenly. George Henry Lewes, the historian of philosophy and friend of Comte; Mr. Holyoake also knew Comte—and whom, among modern celebrities, has he not known? Herbert Spencer; a portrait taken at Montreal. "My old friend, Horace Greely." The late Sir Robert Peel, another close acquaintance. Henry Ward Beecher, America's liberal preacher. A large oil-painting of Richard Carlile, the irrepressible bookseller; the same type of cranium (a phrenologist might point out) as that of Ingersoll. An engraving of Thomas Paine; a justly-prized treasure, for, on turning the picture round, one finds, at the back of the print, an autograph, bold and elegant, of the "rebellious staymaker" himself. Another cherished object is a small contemporary bust of Voltaire, the eyes and lips charmingly lit up with the spirit of satire. A neatly-printed placard, framed picture-wise, caught my attention and much interested me. It was a prospectus of the *Leader* of 1850. The headline runs, "Movement—Information—Entertainment," and among the contributors are named this brilliant group: George Dawson, E. V. Neale, Charles Bray, G. J. Holyoake, Robert Owen, J. A. Froude, Walter Savage Landor, G. H. Lewes, W. J. Linton, Dr. Henry Travis, Harriet Martineau, Joseph Mazzini, Charles Kingsley, Dr. Samuel Smiles, David Masson, F. W. Newman, and William Maccall.

Is George Jacob also among the Papists? Certain it is that he possesses a rosary and relics. The rosary of cherry-coloured beads awaits the day when the father of Secularism will renounce Reason and bend the stubborn knee in prayer. When that happens it will not be done in a corner, for, if ever he resolved to enter the Church he has opposed for half a century, he would pause at the door to tell the world he had unwittingly taught error. As to the relics, I will allude to four—one truculent, two romantic, and one that raises a smile of mingled amusement and tenderness. The truculent relic is an iron-spiked pole which patriotic hands fashioned at the time of the Reform Bill agitation; such weapons, grasped by a resolute squad of Radicals, would have afforded a rough reception to the Duke of Wellington's cavalry. The romantic relics are two flags;



both recall Garibaldi's sacred memory; one was bullet-torn at the battle of Mentone; the other fluttered over one of the vessels that bore the red-shirted Thousand to Marsala. And the fourth is also Garibaldian; it is the fag-end of a candle, moulded by the General's own hand when he earned honest dollars at the factory on Staten Island, U.S. One thinks of the candle which Latimer kindled at the stake. Mr. Holyoake's museum, if I may so speak, also comprises glittering medals, one commemorative of the Milan Industrial Exhibition, and another, very tastefully executed in bronze, recording the proud Jubilee of the Rochdale Pioneers. With these should be mentioned a silver key, which looks ecclesiastical enough to open a Rectory door; it was presented to Mr. Holyoake at the recent opening of the "Equity" co-operative factory in Leicester.

And now for the books. But let me first tell of a work that did not appear on the shelves. A local bookseller begged Mr. Holyoake to take in the parts of a popular illustrated Bible. Our jocose Secularist declined on the ground that the work did not include a photograph of Adam and Eve. The bookseller appeared to ruminate over the objection, as if meditating whether to suggest the improvement to the publishers for the next edition!

Never, till this interview, had I known that Mr. Holyoake had written a work on mathematics. Yet there it was, a little pocket-volume, issued about 1846, and entitled *Mathematics No Mystery*, the title-page displaying some ingenious letters in which various geometrical figures from Euclid were embedded—a design of Mr. Holyoake's own. Equally surprised was I at a clever device for teaching the alphabet (all these publications belong to 1840-50), a *Practical Grammar intended for the Use of those who have Little Time for Study*, Lectures used at the functions of the Manchester Unity and Independent Order of Oddfellows, the *Logic of Facts or Plain Hints on Reasoning*, and *Rudiments of Public Speaking and Debate, or Hints on the Application of Logic*. The lectures for the use of the Oddfellows resulted from a prize competition for £50, a contest in which the "Social Missionary's" facile command of English easily enabled him to come out at the top of the list. The subjects were purely ethical, and make admirable little essays on Charity, Truth, Knowledge, Science, and



Progression. As to the prize, the young propagandist had never handled so much money of his own before. And all this time, despite his literary occupations, he was heart and soul and body with the Chartists. The reader will pardon a trifling digression on the latter subject. The day preceding my visit to Mr. Holyoake I had been reading an account of the great meeting at Kennington Common in April, 1848. One of the mottoes flaunted over the procession was "*And Guizot laughed immoderately.*" What on earth could that mean? I asked Mr. Holyoake. He was present on that memorable occasion. Passing through the City, he had heard a stout alderman advise the special constables to "hit hard." The motto he well remembered as referring to Guizot's attitude on hearing a statement of the sufferings of the people. Six months after his ill-timed laughter the scornful Frenchman was an exile in England.

Return we to the library. I take no account of the ordinary books, such as *Chambers's Encyclopedia* or the *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. Conspicuous stood a long line of some thirty volumes of the *Oracle of Reason*. The first number appeared on November 6th, 1841, and was edited by Charles Southwell; later on Mr. Holyoake's name appears. The *Oracle of Reason* was characterized in the prefatory article as "the only exclusively Atheistical print that has appeared in any age or country." Mr. Holyoake pointed out to me a series of articles which, following Lamarck, expounded evolution before Darwin and Spencer. They were headed "Theory of Regular Gradation," and were written by W. C. (William Chilton). A sooty-looking wood-cut of "Fossil Man" illustrated the first paper—a hairy savage carrying an axe which seems much too skilfully fashioned for primitive man. Dated 1844, I observed a Freethought magazine with the suggestive name of *The Movement: An Anti-Persecution Gazette*, edited by G. J. Holyoake and M. Q. Ryall. Then there was the *Reasoner*, "a Secular and Co-operative Review," also under the guidance of the tireless George Jacob. In 1863 came out *The Secular World and Social Economist*, a continuation of the *Reasoner*. To subsequent periodicals and books issued by Mr. Holyoake there is less need to refer.

A gift from Mazzini consecrates a house. Mr. Holyoake

showed me a copy of the great Italian's *The Duties of Man*, inscribed with his own hand "to his friend, G. J. H., 'with a very faint hope,' Joseph Mazzini." One looks at that prayerful phrase, "with a very faint hope," not without a profundity of regret that sincere men should, in any measure, be divided by the cold walls of dogma. Mazzini lived for the service of man, and rested his soul on God. George Jacob Holyoake has spent a long life in the same pure cause, and yet without laying any gift on the altar. Well, let it pass; the hope did honour to Mazzini. That the hope has been unfulfilled does honour to Mr. Holyoake. I may say, in passing, that the translation of *The Duties of Man* was done by Madame Venturi, and published by Chapman & Hall in 1862. Another prized keepsake was Dr. Chalmers's *Natural Theology*, presented by the distinguished author. The gentle argument of a book was a more sweetly reasonable method of converting Mr. Holyoake than the impetuosity of a Radical friend who went away offended because the ex-prisoner of Gloucester Gaol would not adopt "God and the People" for his motto.

Sir Henry Parkes, ex-Premier of New South Wales, and Mr. Holyoake were friends in their youth, and a copy of Sir Henry's *Fragmentary Thoughts* testified that he could write as well as rule. I had not heard of Percy Greg (alas! for literary fame) until my host introduced to me three of his works, *History of the United States*, *The Devil's Advocate*, and *Without God: Negative Science and Natural Ethics*. Percy, I found, was the son of the well-known Rathbone Greg. And yet another writer—familiar, perhaps, to older Rationalists—was new to me. This was C. R. Pemberton, author of *The Autobiography of Pel. Verjuice*. His *Life and Remains* appeared under the sympathetic editorship of John Fowler. It was in an epitaph on Pemberton, written by Mr. W. J. Fox, of South Place, that the much-worn line of Tennyson was first dignified by conspicuous quotation: "The hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, the love of love."

Of Harriet Martineau Mr. Holyoake was an intimate friend. In her will she left him a copy of her *Autobiography*; and his shelves are enriched by a complete set of those clever booklets, the *Tales of Political Economy*, which made

her famous. Everyone has his taste; for myself, there is none of the celebrities in the gallery of Mr. Holyoake's memory whom I should so much have liked to meet as Miss Martineau.

Not a bad workshop for a historian of the century, I thought, as I scanned the crowded tiers of Mr. Holyoake's library, with its ample stores of letters (what multitudes of letters!) and forgotten but valuable pamphlets, such as those written by Mr. J. A. Roebuck in the early years of Radicalism, or twenty volumes of political manifestoes and broadsides, etc., collected by Francis Place and bound in substantial boards by his own industrious hands. Add to these the living voice of the Father of Secularism, and the said historian would feel himself in clover. Speaking of history, I was interested to hear that Molesworth's *History of England, 1830-1874*, gives an accurate account of the rise of the Secular doctrine in this country.

But a far more luminous and captivating description of "The Origin of Secularism" will be contained in a little work under that title, which Mr. Holyoake hopes ere long to publish.\* The sub-title startles one, "Showing that where Freethought ends Secularism begins;" the point being that, Freethought having thrown the light of reason on the problems and possibilities of life, Secularism is the practical and constructive realization of Rationalist ideas and ideals. And with intense gratitude and pleasure I found that it needed no persuasion of mine to draw out Mr. Holyoake's appreciation of the aims of the Ethical Movement. Nothing was so mean, said Mr. Holyoake, as to decry the old Freethought party, without whose efforts English liberty of opinion would never have reached its present extension; and, on the other hand, nothing was so absurd as to rest content with a rejection of theology, without attempting to travel further.

On reaching home, at the close of a day ever to be remembered, I turned to Mr. Holyoake's *Trial of Theism*, and found, in its eloquent pages, a passage which delineates the basis of the Ethical Movement: "The Theist believes

\* The book has since been published by Watts & Co.

that man can only be guided and sustained by Spiritualism. The Secularist holds that he may be guided and sustained by Naturalism. He believes in 'human duties commencing from man,' and believes them to be sufficient for life, for progress, and for conscience—sufficient for this world if there be no other—and a safe preparation for another if there be one."

## VII.

### GEORGE WILLIAM FOOTE,

PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

WITH a General Election approaching, and the air electric with debate on leaders and politics, it was natural that, when I sat with Mr. Foote in his study one bright Sunday morning, we should fall to discussing democracy and its characteristics. Curious was the chain of speech that led to the topic—Professor Edwin Johnson's eccentric theory of the concoction of Christian doctrine by committees of Benedictine monks; the difficulty of getting committees of any sort to work harmoniously towards a common object; the necessity for the Strong Man, the Dictator, the Cromwell, and the like. Masses of men, said Mr. Foote, were apt to think they made policies for obedient politicians. In reality the politicians led the multitude with guile. Men loved to be led. Not a crowd buzzed and clamoured in the street over a public question but out of it presently emerged a man who assumed the office of spokesman and captain; and the crowd obeyed. These expressions suggested Carlyle, his hero-worship, and his blunt depreciation of the British people as "mostly fools." Mr. Foote remarked that he had no intention of calling the common folk fools. Most men had their aptitudes, and the politicians were simply the men who had aptitudes for the making of programmes. Here Mr. Foote took up a well-thumbed volume of George Meredith's. Men called great who have risen to distinction, observes one of Meredith's characters, are not always men of brains, but "men of aptitudes," who are often enough opposed to the men of brains, insight, and outlook. And Mr. Foote went on to point out that the hope for the future rested in the infusion

into the leaders of the democracy of a sound sense of human brotherhood.

Thence, quite easily, we slid into discussion of the Ethical Movement and its relation with the older Secularism.

The main difference, Mr. Foote thought, lay in their attitudes to the question of iconoclasm. And he quite assented to my statement that the blows struck and the suffering and odium borne by the Freethinkers of the past fifty or a hundred years had made the building of the Ethical churches possible. The Secularists, added the President of the N. S. S., had created the raw material of many advanced parties—Socialists, Ethicals, Sunday Leaguers, and the rest. Of course, he deemed that Free-thought still needed, first and foremost, a militant policy. The Blasphemy Laws remained on the statute-book as a perpetual challenge to our liberties. Those laws, indeed, called for attack much more than the legal hindrances to Secularist bequests. As Mr. Foote remarked (and the fact was new to me), there existed no specific law against bequests for Freethought purposes. Such legacies were invalid simply because they offended against the Blasphemy Laws.

When I looked round Mr. Foote's closely-packed regiments of books, on shelves which formed ladders from floor to ceiling, I could not help smiling at the fact that this defier of stupid Blasphemy Laws, this man whom Holloway Gaol itself had taught to speak with fresh eloquence against superstitions, knew more of theological literature than half-a-dozen Christian deans put together. Nor does he treat his book-treasury as a mere source of arguments for making breaches in the walls of orthodox creeds. He handles the older theological tomes with a respect which almost verges on affection. It is not, of course, that the President venerates the Gospel or the principles of its classic interpreters. But there is, in the great monuments of Christian scholarship, a whole-heartedness, an intellectual strength, and a vigour of reasoning which commands the admiration of the Rationalist foe, and contrasts grievously with the insincere and petty apologetics of the present day.

Mr. Foote's library is wonderfully catholic. A scrutinizing eye would fail to note the omission of any important class of literature. There is even a book on billiards,

which looks out jauntily from a crowd of serious brethren ; and Mr. Foote confessed that he sometimes plied the cue. I make no attempt here to do anything more than indicate the more conspicuous specimens in the President's bibliotheca. To name them all would swell this paper into a bulky bookseller's catalogue, well sprinkled with "rare bargains," and enriched with some notable "first editions."

Place, then, for the Poets. And first among the rhyming crowd (I shall not be careful of chronological order) I note Butler's *Hudibras*, Grey's annotated edition. That Butler's quaint sallies should be to Mr. Foote's taste one easily conceives, for debaters love the poets who supply them with appropriate shafts of verse. But I had scarcely raised my eyes from *Hudibras* when the President said :

"I am very fond of old George Herbert," and pointed to a volume of that writer's poems.

What will the Christian Evidence people think of this ? They may, perhaps, explain it in Herbert's own line :

"A verse may find him who a sermon flies."

For my own part, I find the fact quite natural that the leader of British Secularism should take kindly to the brilliant, honest, high-tempered Herbert. But let us move on. Here is Abraham Cowley, poet and essayist ; and, hard by, stand Homer's *Iliad*—Milton—Goethe—Dryden. The latter is old Jacob Tonson's issue ; and Mr. Foote tells me how Dryden alarmed Tonson into paying up a debt by accusing him of possessing "two left legs and Judas-coloured hair"—which shows that poets, if they occasionally forget the laws of prosody, can also forget the rules of etiquette. Shelley, of course, ennobles the shelf, and reminds me of Mr. Foote's interest in the life and work of the heretical singer. Another heretic presents himself—James Thomson (B.V.), beloved of all Rationalists. Who would have thought of seeing Coventry Patmore ? And some might marvel at the presence of William Blake, mystic and artist ; but, as for me, if I owed Mr. Foote any grudges, I would forget most of them in gratitude for his appreciation of the noble visionary. Browning, in seventeen volumes—seventeen !—I hurried on, in dread lest the President should ask me if I belonged to the Browning Society ; and, by way of relief, there was old "Cherry Ripe"

Herrick, well edited by A. H. Grosart. An inch or two beyond, and I was confronted by modern John Davidson, of whom Mr. Foote speaks in sincere praise. Once it fell to his lot to review a volume of Davidson's, and the poet was happy in declaring (how seldom do poets feel such happiness after rising from the perusal of criticisms!) that, whatever might be said of other reviewers, Mr. Foote at least understood his verses. William Morris—Swinburne—Cowper (curious conjunction of names!)—William Cullen Bryant—Pope; and the rest. Dryden turned up again in his little-known translation of Maimbourg's *History of the League*. Shakespeare was in evidence ten times over; and I listened impatiently to Mr. Foote's glowing eulogy of the genius and breadth of the great William. As to Shakespeare's alleged breadth, I objected that he had ignored a great phase of human experience—the religious sentiment; for example, though Shakespeare must have met Puritans, he has practically nothing to say on what theology calls the "sense of sin." To this Mr. Foote answered that the Poet described all the broad, permanent elements of human nature; and Puritanism was only a transient phase of the development of man's mind. But avaunt, discussion! Let me close the survey of the Poets by telling of a little volume of George Meredith's *Lyrics*, on the fly-leaf of which is inscribed the author's name by way of presentation. The book was sent to Mr. Foote while he lay in Holloway Gaol. If I were a Christian, I should say of Meredith, "Heaven bless him," But I am not; and I merely say he did a noble deed.

Novelists, well, I cherish only a feeble interest in novels. But the President's thoughts are not my thoughts. He admires Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe*, and the artistically-blunt Fielding, and the sneering Thackeray, and the deep-seeing George Eliot, and others. Mr. Meredith's works stood shoulder to shoulder in a long line. I even caught sight of Grant Allen's *The Woman who Did*.

From Novels one easily glides into General Literature. General indeed! I hardly know what to name or what to leave out; but here are some random authors:—Hare's (the brothers) *Guesses at Truth*; Trench's various books on *Words*; the writings of Edmund Burke; Arthur



Helps's *Friends in Council*; a full array of Carlyle; Walter Pater's *Appreciations*; Charles Lamb; Ruskin; Amiel's *Journal*; Goldsmith; Cobbett's collected works (six vols.) and *Register*; Lane's *Arabian Nights*; De Quincey; Kinglake's *Crimean War*; Cervantes—I viewed with much interest *Don Quixote* done into English by Shelton in an edition dated 1620. Of William Smith and his *Thorndale*, alas, I had never heard; and yet, said Mr. Foote, Walter Savage Landor deemed there were things in Smith's works worthy of Shakespeare. The versatile Defoe I greeted with my most genial smile. Addison appeared "complete," as the catalogues have it. Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*—how few people read this eighteenth-century moralist. Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* I was about to pass in haste, when Mr. Foote called my attention to the printer's name. The book came from the press of sturdy Baskerville of Birmingham. The type is admirable, and the neat pages soothing to the eye. I made a note of an excellent edition of Lord Clarendon. Due place was accorded to witty old Thomas Fuller's *Worthies of England*, etc. One of the most remarkable features in Mr. Foote's library is the wealth of old English dramatists, historians, and essayists—Lyly's *Euphues*, Daniel, Tournear, Habington's *Castara*, George Chapman, Sir George Etheridge, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Webster, Wycherly, Heywood, Otway, in isolated editions, or in such collections of reprints as those published by Bullen. Add to these Raleigh's *History of the World*, North's *Plutarch*, and Camden's *Britannia*. I trust the reader will not pronounce the list dry. It is, on the contrary, full of literary life and significance. It was these men who forged some of the best weapons in the armoury of the English language. And rightly Mr. Foote observed to me that he who wished to cultivate a strong and vigorous style could not do better than go back to these ancient masters of our tongue. The racy and virile diction of his own essays and articles shows how well he has put to use the examples of sixteenth and seventeenth-century men of letters. And, if I may say so without offence, their unnecessary bluntness sometimes re-appears in Mr. Foote's authorship.

And now for the Theologians. What a forest of tomes!

If reading orthodox discourses would make a man a Christian, the President ought to be as devout as Saint Francis Xavier. St. Basil on the *Holy Spirit*; St. Augustine's *Confessions*; Cotter Morison's *Life of St. Bernard*; Thomas à Kempis; Erasmus—these will suffice to carry us past the Middle Ages. Here is delightful old Quarles, with his *Emblems, Divine and Moral, and School of the Heart*, and *Boanerges and Barnabas, or Judgment and Mercy*. Perhaps it will be new to many readers that (as Mr. Foote assured me was the case) Quarles did not himself draw the oddly solemn allegorical designs which illustrate his treatises. I will now group together, in a by no means exhaustive list, a number of English writers who stand between the mediæval and latter-day theologians, and I should like to know how many of them have been studied by the average rector or vicar who inveighs against the "ignorance of Infidelity":—Cranmer; the Book of Homilies; Jewel; Sir John Davis (*Immortality of the Soul*); Thomas Jackson (who, Southey said, should be placed first in a reprint of English divines); Thomas Adams; "the judicious Hooker;" Cudworth; Chillingworth; Foxe the martyrologist (eight closely-printed volumes); John Smith, the Cambridge Platonist; Bishop Andrews (*Devotions*); Donne, Beveridge, South, Leighton, Jeremy Taylor, Barrow, Lightfoot, Warburton, Cotton Mather, Greswell, Horne, Paley, "Analogy" Butler, Pearson, Jonathan Edwards.

From John Donne Mr. Foote quoted to me a phrase which he smilingly said might not inaptly be applied to the Theosophists: "Afflicted with the concupiscence of inaccessible knowledges."

As I glanced along the sedate ranks of the divines I thought I detected an omission, and straightway accused Mr. Foote of not possessing a work by old Charnock, whose declamatory piety had drawn tears from me in my Christian teens. The President pointed to the shelf above me, and there, sure enough, stood Charnock on the *Attributes*.

Let me finish these theologians by naming, in one hasty breath, John Henry Newman, Sanday's Bampton Lectures on *Inspiration*, Drummond's *Ascent of Man*, and Canon Driver—or shall we call Driver a Rationalist? And lastly,

as storehouses of handy facts for students and the debating platform, the Parker Society's publications, and a long series of Gibson's *Preservatives from Popery*.

"A really magnificent genius," remarked Mr. Foote, as he pointed to a number of Garth Wilkinson's writings. It was a pleasing incongruity—the Freethinker thus tersely complimenting the Swedenborgian.

How shall I give the tale of the works on Philosophy and Social Science? Again I content myself with scattered types—Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, Leibnitz (*Théodicée*), Spinoza, Locke, Berkeley, Kant, Hume, Hutchinson, Beattie, Stewart, Brown, Hartmann, Mansel, Lotze, Comte—allow me to pause before the enumeration bewilders. And the Economists—Proudhon, Malthus, Thorold Rogers, our latter-day Kidd, in addition to the usual standard treatises. It is an easy transition from Philosophy and Sociology to Rationalism. Do I need to recount, one by one, all the great writers who shine in the Freethought firmament, from Voltaire and Paine to Buckle and Huxley? It will be enough if I name a few works rather out of the common groove, such as Llorente's *Histoire de l'Inquisition*, the notable *Origine de tous les Cultes*, by Dupuis (Mr. Foote's copy is the first edition, dated the Year 3 of the Republic), Middleton's *Inquiry*, Mosheim's *Commentaries on the Affairs of the Christians*, Hislop's *Two Babylons*, Bingham's *Christian Antiquities*, Didron's *Iconography*, Havet's *Le Christianisme et ses Origines*, Réville's *Histoire des Religions*, Frazer's *Golden Bough*, etc. I heard, without surprise, that the President did not subscribe to Professor Johnson's wild theory of the Benedictine fabrication of the Christian creed.

It will have been seen already that Mr. Foote's shelves are illumined with beams from French literature; and there are many more besides those above mentioned—the *Satyre Menippée*, the *Pensées* of Pascal, the discourses of Massillon, the works of Voltaire, Diderot, Rabelais, Chamfort, Joubert, Lanfrey, Courier, Bossuet, Lafontaine, Lavater, etc. There is, also, an appreciable sprinkling of Italian and Spanish authors.

But I must cry halt.

George William Foote is best known to the world as Freethought warrior, orator, debater, controversialist—a

figure pressing through tempest and obstruction. On that sunny morning, when the windows were thrown wide, and the soft air scarcely stirred the garden trees, I saw Mr. Foote as the student, and book-lover, and arm-chair thinker. The sword was in its sheath. In the library I had seen the whetstone which gave keenness to its edge.

## MISS MATHILDE BLIND.

For clear, powerful, picturesque English, Miss Blind's poems stand in marked eminence among contemporary literature. The distinction and beauty of outline, contrasted with the blur and obscurity of the great mass of modern verse, evoke one's keenest admiration and gratitude. Every word is delicately chiselled. The teaching is always acceptable to heart and brain. Never does the poetess lose control of the steeds that draw her chariot of fire. Her thought never evaporates itself into a brilliant cloud of verbiage. Her *Ascent of Man* unfolds a sparkling panorama of human history unique in its method and sentiment. Were it not for confidence in her perfect taste, I should have regretted the intention, which she expressed to me in the course of conversation, of adding new material to the *Ascent*. The very title of this poem pleases the Rationalist ear. It poetically gives the lie to the outworn doctrine of the Fall. From early years, indeed, Miss Blind had emancipated herself from the thrall of pietism. The girl was mother of the woman.

"I did not," she remarked, "as most girls seemed to do, take our position for granted. I used to startle my school fellows by asking why we should not go to Universities, enter professions, have votes, and sit in Parliament. I think the strongest desire of my life at that time was for independence—not to be hampered in my development by custom and convention. Life was a daily-renewed fight with the prejudices of those around me. Yet, though I was nick-named Donna Quixote, most of my girlish notions as to Woman's Rights are, one by one, being realized. You may imagine how I hailed the appearance of John Stuart Mill's *Subjection of Women*. I read it one night from

beginning to end, and day dawned when I closed this book, which is one of the milestones in the history of our development."

"And you were a youthful Nonconformist in religion?"

"I was never brought up according to the dogma of any creed. But there came a time when a sense of a void in the universe became a torment. I tried hard to find peace in the idea of Christ. For my schoolmistress, who belonged to the sect of Plymouth Brethren, had persuaded me that the world can never satisfy the cravings of the heart of man. But I had drunk too deeply already at the fountain of modern thought, and could find no antidote in her beliefs. While engaged in discussing Christianity with some of my friends at school I involuntarily converted one of them to free thought, and got turned out for it."

Full soon did the young poetess undergo the painful initiation which all must endure who wish to scale the uplands of intellectual freedom.

"And where are we Agnostics now?"

"Facing only a negation," replied Miss Blind. "The point we have reached is only a half-way house—a very desolate half-way house. It yields very little positive satisfaction. We need a new religious synthesis. It seems the most crying need of our time. In the search for that connecting link between the personal and universal life which alone makes existence rationally possible to us, as thinking beings, how many have strayed back to the Theosophies of the far East!"

At length we veered round to the evergreen topic of books. I was curious to know what tales Miss Blind had been fond of when a girl. I was amused, but not surprised, to hear that she had given the cold shoulder to the insipid heroines of the fictions written specially for girlhood, and zestfully read *Robinson Crusoe*, and other boys' books, in which the chief actors, if sometimes lacking in the cardinal virtues, were at least interesting. Above all, the favourite was a French story of the adventures of Numa Pompilius, because the nymph Egeria was the inspiration of all the great things he did.

All, I noted, were works of imagination.

"Well," observed Miss Blind, "and you know Schiller's

saying, that 'Imagination is the only thing that remains for ever young.'"

The quotation provided a ready bridge to the poets. A little random prompting from me sufficed to keep the current of Miss Blind's reflections at an easy flow.

"The two poets who made the first indelible impression on me were Dante and Byron. I think it is no exaggeration to say that at one time the more vivid part of existence was passed in that outer circle of the Inferno where the great Pagan Poets dwelt eternally apart. Indeed, the poets that have attempted to fashion a new world according to some ideal inherent in their own minds have always possessed a stronger attraction for me than the Greek Realists. On that account I also loved the visionary Blake—that inspired singer living in the prosiest part of the eighteenth century. Do you remember that mystic passage in his *Milton*, describing the sun's wonder at the matin song of the lark?—

'Thou hearest the nightingale begin the song of spring.  
The lark, sitting upon his earthy bed, just as the morn  
Appears, listens silent; then springing the waving cornfield, loud  
He leads the choir of day—trill, trill, trill, trill—  
Mounting upon the wings of light into the great expanse,  
Re-echoing against the lovely blue and heavenly shell;  
His little throat labours with inspiration, every feather  
On throat, and breast, and wing vibrates with the effluence divine.  
All nature listens to him silent; and the awful sun  
Stands still upon the mountains, looking on this little bird  
With eyes of soft humility, with wonder, love, and awe.'

"It is not a far cry from Blake to Shelley. That exile in his century would indeed have been astonished and shocked had he known that his centenary would be most respectably celebrated in a little church at Horsham. But time's revenges are sometimes apt to startle one. My first literary essay was a paper on Shelley's poetic work, for the *Westminster Review*. I afterwards edited a selection of his poems for the Tauchnitz series, and read a paper at the Shelley Society comparing Shelley's view of Nature with Darwin's. Talking of poems that had a peculiarly stirring effect on me, I must not omit Mrs. Browning's 'Aurora Leigh,' which gave me some of the sensations Keats has immortalized in his sonnet on first reading Chapman's translation of Homer. But I must not speak of Mrs.

Browning without alluding to her great French contemporary, George Sand. What a writer that was ! What a breadth of experience ! What an illimitable grace of style ! Here, indeed, was an author who, in dealing with the sex question, grasped the problem in its entirety, instead of—as in the case of many so-called New Women—seeing only one single point ; not unlike hypnotized chickens, incapable of raising their eyes from the white circle traced round them.”

“ And Goethe ? ” I asked.

“ Of course the greatest of modern poets. But that is a truism. In moving onward, the world would do well to turn to him for light and leading —— ”

I broke in by objecting that, in *Faust*, Goethe had employed the vehicle of the supernatural.

“ Yes ; but you must remember,” said Miss Blind, “ that his subject is a mediæval one, and all this symbolism was a living part of the legend—the only literary garment in which he could clothe his ideas.”

I pursued the point, however, for it involves, as I think, important issues ; and I found Miss Blind not disinclined to admit that the poetry of the future might do well to dispense with supernatural machinery. How could she help admitting it ? Her own work contains but the merest trace of these ancient devices.

The Novelists next claimed our thoughts.

“ I was an omnivorous novel-reader at one time,” Miss Blind avowed ; “ I now prefer the life and movement of the theatre and the concert, and, above all, the living romance of travel. I have been much of a wanderer of late. But of all the countries Egypt has made the profoundest impression on me. To read *The Arabian Nights* on the terrace of Shepherd’s Hotel in Cairo is to become a dweller in an enchanted world, where the figures moving in the streets seem the same as in the days of good Haroun al Raschid.”

“ But about English novels ? ”

“ You know that I have written a life of George Eliot. Her novels, at once so true to life in their minutest detail, yet so full of philosophical grasp, have always had a strong attraction for me, though the fire and passion of Charlotte Brontë have proved more fascinating.”



The rest I forget, for I had managed to inveigle Miss Blind into a discussion on the length of modern novels (I think they are usually too long) and their ethical value.

"I like a long novel," said Miss Blind; "I like to sit down and think I shall enjoy making a writer's acquaintance for a whole week. In a longer book each stroke tells; and, finally, you retain a lasting impression on the memory. Why do we read novels? In order that we may acquire a wider range of human experience. The great fascination of the novel lies in this—that it introduces us to many modes of life, and feeling, and thought, which otherwise we should perhaps never come in contact with."

"Is not History a means of arriving at the same end?"

"Well, it enlarges our horizon in a different sense; does it not? We are not so much familiarized with the ways of individuals as with the working of masses of men, with the evolution of ideas through time. Even when, as in the histories of Carlyle and Michelet, the personal and dramatic element are made the dominant factors, the effect produced is still very different from that of the writer of fiction; though it is partly true, as a clever child once remarked when I told him to read history instead of story-books, that in reading history you never know when fact ends and fiction begins."

I did not try to exhaust the list of historians. It interests one to observe the particular authors which first spring to the lips.

"Philosophy? I never made a systematic study of it. Of course I have read a good deal of Kant, Schopenhauer, and Spencer. Darwin naturally became the chief mental factor in my development, as in that of the whole thinking world. No doubt our century will be known in the future as the Darwinian age. It has been the greatest revolution in our view of the universe and man's position in it that the world has yet seen.

"Essayists?"

"Ah, yes. Emerson, at one time, had a very marked influence upon me. Then Pater—particularly his Renaissance essays."

"We won't reckon Max Nordau among the essayists?"

"The critic of Degeneration is himself degenerate; he wildly exaggerates; though I allow there is a good

deal of truth in his attack on the French school of *décadents*."

"I need not ask you if you are familiar with Voltaire, Renan, Strauss" —

"Strauss?—I may tell you that one of the first things I did in the way of literature was to translate his *Old Faith and the New* into English; I also wrote the memoir which is prefixed to the third edition."

To make Strauss more widely known is indeed a service to the progress of Reason.

Sooner or later we were bound to come to Ibsen. Ibsen, alas! is ever with us. With satisfaction I found that Miss Blind, though admiring Ibsen's genius, considers him too much of an anatomist, who painfully lays bare skeletons which art ought to clothe with grandeur and beauty. From Ibsen the path of conversation wound gloriously back, up the heights of that Greek drama which ought to purify and instruct through the sentiments of pity and terror. I agreeably listened while Miss Blind ran over the salient incidents in the *Alcestis* of Euripides. And then, taking sudden flight from the open-air theatre and blue heavens of Greece to the land of Shakespeare, Miss Blind pensively asked why England was no longer merry with dance and song and Maypole.

I thought that, on the whole, England was happier now than then.

Miss Blind thought not. Even over the temple of literature a shadow brooded.

"Literature," said Miss Blind, "has too much become debased into a commercial transaction. In the same measure it has lost dignity. Stories and articles have assumed a weak and ephemeral character. Literature, in my opinion, should take the place of the old priesthood, and assist mankind in perceiving and developing the ideal."

"What will women do to help that movement?"

Miss Blind reminded me of George Eliot and Mrs. Browning. And then, as if by way of allegory, she recited to me the central *motif* of George Sand's *Mauprat*, and the gracious influence which the captive heroine exercised over her wild and undisciplined master.

Such miracles of amelioration can indeed be worked. In

working them, the spirit of Woman, like the soul of Marguerite, is uprising ; and among the hands that beckon that spirit on, not the least conspicuous is that of Mathilde Blind.

## IX.

### MR. J. ALLANSON PICTON.

MR. JAMES ALLANSON PICTON insists that he is a Christian. Yet his career has been a splendid witness for Rationalism ; his books teach it ; his conversation breathes it. From the legend of Jesus he strips all supernatural overgrowths. At the Dissenting conventicle of St. Thomas's Square, Hackney, he exhorted eager crowds, year after year, to reject the miraculous, and conserve only the sweetly-reasonable elements of religion. On the School Board for London, from 1870 to 1879, he figured as the foremost and immovable advocate of purely Secular Education. In Parliament, as member for Leicester, he took the side of Progress and Heresy. South Place hears him gladly. He made a speech at the Thomas Paine Exhibition. He lends a lustre to *The Agnostic Annual*. Yet he names himself Christian, because he reveres the ethics of the original Jesus.

"I am not a book-worshipper," Mr. Picton said to me as I chatted with him in his study. "I am more interested in human life than its portrayal in literature. So far as any particular literature strongly, or tragically, or hopefully, or inspiringly, represents the evolution of human affairs, in just that proportion it interests me. The plays of Æschylus, for example, the *Agamemnon* and the *Eumenides*."

The allusion reminded me that, on a former occasion, I had surprised Mr. Picton in the act of reading a Greek play in the original tongue. It was on a Sunday evening, too. One would not usually associate Radicalism with a passion for the classics. But the ex-M.P. for Leicester talks with enthusiasm of the Greeks, their language, genius, architecture, sculpture. When I hinted at the question of deleting Greek from the syllabus of the public schools, he looked almost horror-stricken.

"It would be an unspeakable loss to education. I don't say that all boys and girls should learn either Greek or Latin; but for all those who are to pursue culture for its own sake, or be the means of conveying it to others, classical literature, as the embodiment of some of the greatest thoughts, is absolutely essential."

We went on to compare the ethics of the Greek drama and of Christianity.

"Look," said Mr. Picton, "at the *Antigone* of Sophocles. More than four hundred years before the Christian era the proud independence of conscience was set forth as heroically and ideally as among the early Christians. Think of the speech in which Antigone defends her refusal to obey the order of Kreon, who had forbidden the burial of her brother. She draws just that distinction between mere human ordinances and the eternal laws of God which forms so high a note in the Christian gospels."

And Mr. Picton let fall the very just observation that there was a tendency in Christianity to under-value the importance of Self-assertion.

Still keeping company with the Immortals, we turned to Lucretius and his *De rerum natura*.

"A most comprehensive poem, an inspired poem," remarked Mr. Picton, "in which we hear the voice of a man from the depths of lonely thought in an age entirely unappreciative of such thought. He realized the mystery of existence, and gained his evil reputation for irreligiousness simply through his passionate contempt for the misrepresentation of religion in the pagan practice and ritual. Lucretius realized that the forces and processes of evolution were transcendental, and far greater than ordinary men conceived."

Our dialogue touched on the later poets—Shakespeare, Blake, Browning, Tennyson, etc.

"Yes, I am one of Shakespeare's worshippers," confessed Mr. Picton. "Of all English authors, there are two, Shakespeare and Lord Bacon, who seem to me to compress more meaning into a few words than any others do. It is perfectly marvellous to count up the number of thoughts contained in a few lines of their writing."

"Shakespeare *and* Lord Bacon?" I interposed, thinking of Ignatius Donnelly and his cryptograms.

Incredulity beamed in Mr. Picton's smile.

"Shakespeare *and* Lord Bacon," he repeated. "I think Bacon would have written plays with much more care for literary form and precision than Shakespeare shows. The plays were the productions of a stupendous genius, but yet a genius working for a livelihood, complying with the rough necessities and conditions of the popular theatre, and appealing by quip and joke to the popular taste."

As we conversed of William Blake, Mr. Picton threw out a luminous suggestion which immediately found its way to my note-book. Readers of Blake's biography will remember how the artist-poet had the singular faculty of seeing faces in the air, and mysterious spiritual presences. Why not, in a similar way, explain the early Christian visions of a risen Christ?

Then we came to the thorny topic of Browning.

"I have very carefully read *The Ring and the Book*, and not many people have done that. I don't think Browning pays sufficient attention to rhythm; and, in my opinion, rhythm is essential to poetry. I question very much whether his work will live."

"And Tennyson?"

"A master of rhythm, of course; though, as I think, his ideas of humanity and history do not reach the highest level. I have, however, the warmest sympathy with his view of what I think will be the future form of religion, as indicated in his 'Higher Pantheism.' Early in life I was a fervent admirer of 'In Memoriam,' and could recite every word of it from memory. That and 'Maud' are his greatest works—'Maud' for its music of passion, and 'In Memoriam' for its music of thought."

Thence we easily slid into the subject of Spencer and the Unknowable.

"Spencer," said Mr. Picton, pointing to a copy of *First Principles*, on the bookshelves, "was the foundation on which I built up a great deal of my progress in thought. I believe his doctrine of the Unknowable affords ample scope for religion."

"Religion with an apparatus of ritual?"

"Certainly, if the ritual is a symbol of truth rather than of sacerdotalism. I once attended a meeting held in the Jerusalem Chamber in the time of the late Dean Stanley.

My friend Mr. Edward Clodd was there, he and I being the only two laymen present. The Dean received me very cordially. He had read my *Mystery of Matter*. To my surprise he asked me to address the meeting. I did so, and spoke on ritual, drawing a distinction between symbolic ritual and sacerdotal. The Symbolic, I said, suggested spiritual truths in forms suitable to the imperfection of humanity; the Sacerdotal sought to express the miraculous power of the clergy. My protest against sacerdotalism met with the entire sympathy of the audience."

With Spencer one readily links the name of Stuart Mill. Mr. Picton told me how he had diligently studied the *Logic* and *Political Economy*. He could not aver that he particularly admired the *Logic*, and he considered Stanley Jevons's attack on Mill was well justified.

My eye wandered towards a volume of Sir William Hamilton's *Metaphysics*. Perhaps, I hinted, that cloudy science had opened up very few useful truths. Mr. Picton dissented, and affirmed that Coleridge's metaphysical essays were full of suggestions of very profound truths.

I ventured to quote Buckle against the metaphysicians. Of Buckle, however, Mr. Picton expressed no unalloyed admiration. His *History of Civilization* contained many excellent things, and displayed great intellectual power; but he projected his work on too large a scale, and lacked a sense of proportion. In a strain of higher eulogy Mr. Picton referred to Gibbon.

"Gibbon's *Decline* is one of the greatest historical works ever written. To put Thucydides beside it is altogether absurd. It displays one of the finest conceptions ever embodied in literature—the connection of the fall of the old world with the rise of the new, and the gathering into one view of the almost innumerable lines of influence that have played and inter-played to involve the modern world. The greatest generals, it has been said, are they who make the fewest mistakes; to a certain extent the saying may be applied to historians; and Gibbon made very few. But I don't think he appreciated the moral side of Christianity, and his explanation of the rise of that religion is comparatively futile. He did not appreciate the capacity that exists in human nature, and that Christianity gave voice to, for aspiration after a simpler and purer morality."

Neander's *Church History*, which I caught sight of, had now, I thought, gone out of fashion.

"Naturally ; because Neander did his best to conserve the supernatural theory of the Church ; and that has now become impossible. But you can learn from Neander the history of the development and transition from one theological point of view to another."

"And here is Westcott's *Study of the Gospels*."

"That, too, is behind the age ; but it is a very intelligent book. And one of Westcott's arguments will endure. He attaches importance to the idea of an oral gospel, an early Synoptic tradition which existed a generation or two before it took a written form. I think that is in the highest degree likely to be true."

"Of course you like *Supernatural Religion* ?"

"A very important book," replied Mr. Picton ; "but I cannot help feeling that its author is a good deal animated by prejudice. One ought not to assume a hostile attitude towards Christian origins. Whatever corruptions its professors may be responsible for, the original impulse, I am persuaded, was purely good. As to the gospel literature, it is impossible to assign its substance to the second century. True, the first Christians wrote very little and talked much ; but their tradition remained in the memory of succeeding generations, showing, no doubt, enormous differences in tone, spirit, and form. Though Paul's epistles came earlier than the written gospels, they read like the compositions of a much later period, because the gospels retained the character of their source in loose oral communication."

"Renan shows more sympathy ?" •

"I am a very great admirer of Renan. He had a kindly human sympathy with the originators of Christianity which is often wanting in German critics—in Zeller, for example. He realized that at the birth of a new age, and amidst the excitement of new ideas, thought would take unusual forms, and natural events would be magnified into miraculous occurrences. At the same time, I don't regard Renan as a sound critic."

Talking of unsound critics, I may find a place here to record Mr. Picton's opinion of Mr. A. J. Balfour and Mr. Gladstone. Of Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* Mr. Picton said it was one of the most sceptical books he had



ever read; it shook the foundations of all belief whatever in either morality or religion.

"The argument comes to this—that you cannot have satisfactory evidence of anything, and therefore it is best to believe what is fashionable."

Of Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Picton's judgment was summed up epigrammatically: "One of the greatest speakers, and one of the poorest writers."

"Just the reverse of Goldsmith," I supposed, and Mr. Picton nodded assent.

Presently we happened upon Mr. John Morley's *National Education*.

"Published in 1873," sighed Mr. Picton, as he looked at the title-page; "and how far are we now from realizing the ideal that he put forward! And it is mainly because of the unfaithfulness of the Nonconformists to their own principles. They had always declaimed against taking public money for religious purposes, until they secured the abolition of church rates. Two years after that a proposition was made to take public money, in the form of rates, for teaching the Bible in elementary schools; and, with a few exceptions, the Nonconformists supported it. They were confident that the Bible instruction would amount to teaching their own doctrines. I consider that one of the greatest inconsistencies and treacheries to principle that the history of parties can show. I advocate Secular Education, not because I don't appreciate the high value of the Bible in education, but because I do not believe, in the present state of opinion, that it can be usefully employed in the public elementary schools."

"Huxley advocated its retention?"

"Yes, but he did not do so out of any truckling to public opinion. I sat on the School Board with him. His motive, I am sure, was thoroughly genuine. He looked upon the Bible as a great classic, and he believed its stories formed a useful means of conveying moral instruction to children. He had no idea that it would be used as it has been. He told me afterwards, in the course of conversation, that he was disappointed with the result, and that he was inclined to think my point of view was the right one."

We sailed into calmer waters when we took from the shelves the *Imitation of Christ* and *Theologica Germanica*.

"I believe," said Mr. Picton, "the *Imitation* has a universal significance. Whatever your idea of the supreme sanction of morality may be, that book teaches and inspires the thought of absolutely unconditional surrender and subordination of self to something transcendently greater. I don't wonder it is so favourite a work even with the Positivists. A similar lesson is impressed in the *Theologica Germanica*. It teaches that the finite being has the same relation to the Eternal as the radiance of a candle to the candle itself."

In Brown's excellent *Life of Bunyan* we found a common interest; and I learned that Mr. Picton took a willing part in facilitating and forwarding its publication. A very different biography was that of the late Charles Bradlaugh, by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner. Of the famous member for Northampton Mr. Picton spoke in terms of admiration. And yet another biography arrested my attention, that of the late Sir James Picton, written by Mr. Picton himself. Sir James climbed to his knighthood, his Liverpool town-councillorship, his literary reputation, and his affluence from the very valley of the shadow; for, at one time, he was reduced to absolute starvation, and regarded the offer of thirty shillings a week as a splendid opportunity.

• From fact to fiction. In other words, we discussed novels and novelists. When I pressed for a list of examples of novels of ethical influence, Mr. Picton named not many, but these included *Jane Eyre*, nearly all George Eliot's, and, last and supreme, the tales of Sir Walter Scott.

Many readers may thank me for appending the titles of Mr. Picton's chief books. The life of his father has just been referred to. *New Theories and the Old Faith* (1870) attracted the appreciative notice of Professor Tyndall, and is quoted in a note to Darwin's *Descent of Man*. Other works are: *The Mystery of Matter* (1873); *Oliver Cromwell* (1882); *Rise and Fall of the English Commonwealth* (1884); *Conflict of Oligarchy and Democracy* (1885); and *The Religion of Jesus* (1893).

In these books, as in Mr. Picton's long public career, a

spirit of strenuous love of liberty, civil, mental, and ethical, manifests itself in suasive reasoning and well-chiselled and forceful language. With a Christian Pantheist of so honourable, energetic, and helpful a type the Agnostic wisely joins hand and heart.

## MR. JOSEPH MAZZINI WHEELER.

IF it had not been for the peremptory command of silence enjoined upon visitors to the British Museum Reading-room, I should assuredly have preferred to interview Mr. Wheeler in that Paradise of Bibliophiles. There, amid a great cloud of witnesses, ranged majestically tier above tier, we could have talked on philosophy, history, and all the shining triumphs of the Freethought pen. Mr. Wheeler haunts that temple of learning as devotedly as a Catholic lingers about a favoured shrine. Thence he draws the multitudinous facts with which he astonishes and delights the readers of the *Freethinker* week by week; and there he discovers and elucidates those secrets of religious history which are so brilliantly exposed in his *Footsteps of the Past*. The "Happy Island," as Matthew Arnold called the Reading-room, not being available, I chatted with Mr. Wheeler in his own library at home.

From a perusal of Mr. Wheeler's articles and books I should not have deemed that he burned incense to poets. But I took his word for it when he pointed to a group of verse books—*Songs of Freedom* (edited by H. S. Salt); *Narcissus*, by his Fabian friend, Edward Carpenter, the Thoreau of England; William Morris; Swinburne; and the rest—and told me he had read them all. Perhaps I speak with improper disdain. But Mr. Wheeler's "Poets' Corner" was nearly the occasion of an angry debate between us. I casually mentioned that I liked Milton better than the over-raised Shakespeare, and Mr. Wheeler, after muttering something about there being "a flaw somewhere" (as I write phonography, I am sure I do not misreport him), declined to discuss the question further. I fancied that even his dog "Spot"—a faithful creature, who, like Lord Nelson, has only one eye—looked at me suspiciously.

A shelf of books relating to Shakespeare included W. J. Birch's *Inquiry into the Philosophy and Religion of Shakespeare*, Coleridge's *Notes*, Gerald Massey's *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, Hazlitt's *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, Bailey's *Received Text of Shakespeare*, etc. Seven cities claimed Homer as a native, and more than that number of schools of thought claim the Stratford poet for their own. Birch and Churton Collins and Mr. Wheeler read Freethought in the dialogue and scepticism in the soliloquies. There may, perhaps, lie a significance in the alteration which Mr. Wheeler pointed out to me in the close of *Hamlet*. The first edition of 1603 ends with the words, "Farewel, Horatio; heauen receiue my soule," for which Shakespeare afterwards substituted, "The rest is silence."

Of the martyred Bruno Mr. Wheeler possesses a relic in a work dated 1591, and entitled *De Compositione Imaginum Liber*, with which is bound up the *De Triplici Minimo et Mensura*. For such speculations on the nature of ideas and the functions of monads or atoms of life Bruno bore the penalty of death by fire. Another Latin book belonging to the same period is anonymous—*De Tribus Impostoribus*. The man who could trace its true history would for ever be known as "The Ingenious." The three impostors it refers to are Moses, Christ, and Mohammed. It seems to have been written on the model of an earlier work, and it is, in reality, a Freethought composition. If only the facts could be unearthed, we should probably be astonished to find how much heresy ran in subterranean currents through the Christendom of the Middle Ages. Averroës gave vogue to the idea of the Three Impostors when he said: "The Jewish religion was a law for children, the Christian religion a law which it was impossible to follow, and the Mohammedan religion is a law in favour of swine."

Then we turned to later times. "If," remarked Mr. Wheeler, showing me a neatly-arranged manuscript-book, "I had an order from a publisher, I would complete the History of English Freethought. Here are the plan and the materials."

I wish a publisher could have descended on the spot, like the angel Gabriel, and closed the bargain; for nobody in these islands could do the thing so well as the author of the *Dictionary of Freethinkers*. Mr. Wheeler is a kind

of "Old Mortality" of Rationalism. He never tires of recutting the epitaphs of the heretics of the past, and bringing to light their half-forgotten heroism and achievements. And naturally his library is well sprinkled with bygone English deists and iconoclasts—Woolston's *Discourse on the Miracles*; Priestley's *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*; Godfrey Higgins's *Apology for the Life and Character of the Celebrated Prophet of Arabia called Mohammed the Illustrious* (1829); *Ecce Homo*; or, *a Critical Inquiry into the History of Jesus of Nazareth, being a Rational Analysis of the Gospels* (for publishing this book, adapted from the French of D'Holbach, in 1813 the publisher Houston was made to smart); *Palæoromæica* (1822; a work which argues for a Latin basis to many manuscripts of the Greek Testament); Anthony Collins's *Scheme of Literal Prophecy Considered, Discourse of Free-Thinking*, etc.; Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation*; all Toland's works; Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*; Hobbes's *Human Nature* (1684). I ask pardon of the rest of the revered shades for not cataloguing all their names.

Needless to say, Mr. Wheeler cherishes profound regard for the memory of Thomas Paine, the Servant of Light in two hemispheres. I spent a quarter of an hour in turning over a pile of Paine literature which has formed part of the two recent exhibitions. A poetical leaflet greatly amused me by its union of wretched verse with fervent intention and zealous eulogy. One stanza will suffice :—

" All hell was up ! each sect was roused to rage ;  
 Impotent pens their nerveless venom threw ;  
 While happy millions hailed the gifted sage,  
 And gave applauses where applause was due."

Other interesting items were an early German translation of *The Age of Reason*, and an edition (with portrait) of *The Rights of Man* issued at Copenhagen in 1793; Rickman's *Life of Paine* (1819); Carlile's weekly political paper, the *Prompter*; and a copy of Elihu Palmer's *Principles of Nature*, published in 1823 by Carlile, with an engraving of the blind author.

The shore of Rationalism is strewn with the wrecks of castaway journals, which were launched in hope, navigated with difficulty through the shoals of prejudice and indifference, and finally abandoned by their crews. But while such

Freethought antiquarians as Mr. Wheeler treasure stray copies, these vanished magazines will serve a purpose, and speak a message to posterity. Here are the names of some of the derelicts:—The *Oracle of Reason*, the *Reasoner*, Southwell's *London Investigator*, the *Pathfinder*, the *Secularist*, etc. In the latter Mr. Wheeler used to write; and he assisted the *National Reformer* as far back as 1868. I was struck by a lithograph in the *Investigator* for 1859. It was the first published portrait of Charles Bradlaugh, and faithfully showed the firm mouth and strong chin.

Literary curios abounded in that section of Mr. Wheeler's library where he kept his bound-up pamphlets and articles detached from the leading monthlies. Thus one volume is labelled "Comparative Religion," and embraces pieces by Max Müller, Lang, Huxley, A. Lyall, Sayce, Tylor, etc. Others are French collections—Littré, Burnouf, Renan, Hugo, Bert, etc. Mr. Wheeler, himself an industrious pamphleteer, stands father to several volumes. And let a passing word be given to the fleeting but useful tracts of Emma Martin, Southwell, William Maccall, Francis Neale, etc.

A rare little book of G. J. Holyoake's bore the title, *Rationalism: A Treatise for the Times*—those times being fifty years ago. "Rationalism" and "Rationalist" are good words, and preferable, I think, to "Secularism" and "Secularist." Quite as rare is the privately-printed (1884) *Shelley: A Poem*, by James Thomson (B.V.), which includes a paper on the nobly mystical Blake. Of *Nimrod: A Discourse on Certain Passages of History and Fable*, by Algernon Herbert (1828), I had never before heard; but that remark applies to a very considerable number of Mr. Wheeler's treasures. One half expects hints on hunting and fishing in a book named *Nimrod*. Contrariwise, it plunges into speculations on Antichrist, the Freemasons, the Rosicrucians, etc.

The Rosicrucians—the word suggests alchemical fumes and the burning of magic lights and the muttering of incantations. Of such things I tremblingly thought when Mr. Wheeler directed my eyes to his "Occult Cupboard." As he opened the door I braced myself for the ordeal, and breathed a sigh of relief when I beheld, not a writhing serpent or a grinning skeleton, but a demure array of books. Odd books, to be sure—Swedenborg's *Conjugal Love*, a

treatise on *Psycho-therapeutics*, Garth Wilkinson's *Human Body*, etc. Full of droll attraction were the *Trial of Joanna Southcote* (1804) and that prophetess's *Dispute between the Woman and the Powers of Darkness* (1802)—a debate in which neither the Woman nor Beelzebub pretends to feel any regard for Parliamentary restrictions on the energy of epithets.

Among books on philology Mr. Wheeler showed me Pincott's *Laws of Language* and Dr. Edward Johnson's *Nuces Philosophicæ, or the Philosophy of Things*, which he admired, adding that Johnson was a disciple of Horne Tooke. And there, too, hard by, was Tooke's *Diversions of Purley*; and I discovered (what is perhaps known to but few readers) that the *Diversions of Purley* merely forms the sub-title of the work, the true title running *Epea Pteroenta*. Another favourite author of Mr. Wheeler's is Sir Arthur Helps—a proof that he does not yield the tribute of esteem only to Freethought writers.

"And you like Gibbon, of course?" I asked.

"Everybody begins the *Decline*," said Mr. Wheeler; "but I have read the whole of it."

I had not; but I kept silence. "But at the present time," continued Mr. Wheeler, "I devote a good deal of my leisure reading to travels, such as Lamont's *Wild Life Among the Pacific Islanders*. Lamont, you know, lived among the savages, and ate cocoa-nuts and fish like they did; and from such observations I think a good deal more light on human evolution can be obtained than from the old pretentious treatises on history."

I thought inwardly that Mr. Wheeler sometimes inclined to put too much stress on the savage elements of human culture, but I remembered the "flaw somewhere" and Spot's scornful gaze, and I forbore.

Another book which Mr. Wheeler cordially commended is Hartland's *Legend of Perseus*, which he classifies with those fine compositions—Frazer's *Golden Bough* and Tylor's *Primitive Culture*. And since some Rationalists consider Matthew Arnold rather wanting in potency, I gladly record that Mr. Wheeler speaks gratefully of the influence exerted upon himself by Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*, etc.

Though it had no connection with any of the *isms* that immediately concerned me, I could not help expressing



interest and curiosity when, as we sat down for a rest, Mr. Wheeler took up L. O. Pike's *The English and their Origin: A Prologue to Authentic English History* (1866). The argument of the work is that the English nation has less affinity with the German, and more with the French, than is usually thought, and a conclusion drawn from this novel fact, or assumption, is that racial kinship as well as expediency should induce the English and French peoples to forget old feuds and make an eternal pact of friendship. Mr. Wheeler spread out before me a plate of engraved portraits of French public men, and he affirmed that the type of features bore a strong resemblance to our native mould. I tried to see the likeness, and almost succeeded. Anyhow, with all my heart I echoed his wish that we and our high-minded neighbours may help the cause of Freedom by binding ourselves mutually with the chain of amity.

A portrait of Mazzini adorned the wall, reminding one that Italy, as well as France, has claims upon English sympathy. After Mazzini Mr. Wheeler himself was named. It is a great name; and Joseph Mazzini Wheeler has proved himself worthy of it by a lengthy and loyal service to Truth, a quiet courage in exploring regions of knowledge hitherto nearly untrodden, and an unfaltering patience in the popular statement of facts laboriously acquired.

## THE REV. CHARLES VOYSEY, B.A.

A HEALTHY exhilaration stirs the blood when one spends an hour with a rebel against a creed incompetent to answer the needs of modern thought. Mr. Voysey, once vicar of Healaugh, Yorkshire, has the honour of being a rebel against the dogmas of the Church of England. The Church recognised his ability by casting him out. The Theistic church in Swallow Street, Piccadilly, stands as a monument of his energy and his convictions.

That the *Literary Guide* represented the Agnostic school in no sense damped my desire to pay a visit to the notable heretic who exhorts men to love an Eternal Father ; nor will the fact, I trust, prevent the reader from honest appreciation of Mr. Voysey's virile struggle towards freedom of soul. It would ill become a journal that pays homage to Voltaire and Paine to withhold the right hand of fellowship from Charles Voysey. On his side, also, the catholic spirit reveals itself. When I told Mr. Voysey that I marched under the banner of the Ethical Movement, he replied, with good-humoured bluntness, that he was sorry to hear it. For a brief space the blades of argument crossed and flashed, but we concluded a happy truce in the mutual recognition of the claims of morality, and of the need for an appeal to conscience in order to evoke the ethical impulse.

There is, perhaps, a secret link between heresy and the stars. Astronomers are the natural enemies of the Christian creed. Astronomy opens up abysses of brilliance in which the poor little creeds sink and disappear. And Mr. Voysey, like Kant, delights in the majesty of the starry heavens. He possesses a noble telescope, a 7-inch reflector. The glass was ground by the expert hand of Dr. Vallance, who lightly bears his burden of ninety years. I descried

on Mr. Voysey's shelves Sir Robert Ball's *Story of the Heavens*, and Nasmyth and Carpenter's work on the Moon.

Among the literary treasures I found a foremost place assigned to the elaborate and ingenious *Rivers of Life*, by Major-General Forlong, who, following after the pioneer labours of Godfrey Higgins in the *Anacalypsis*, has worked out an extensive scheme of the influence of Phallicism on religious beliefs and symbols. And the symbols, gleaming in red and gold, often decorate the windows of churches! A word of greeting, also, Mr. Voysey gave to Inman's *Ancient Faiths Embodied in Ancient Names*. He allowed that the speculators in these esoteric regions did sometimes overrun the just limits of their theories, but considered a mass of truth remained after a due discount. He did not, however, receive much of the daring doctrine of Mr. Gerald Massey; nor could he follow the yet wilder flights of Professor Johnson into the cloudland of the Benedictine conspiracy; and I quite concurred in his doubts as to the reliability of Kersey Graves's *Sixteen Crucified Saviours*.

Mr. Voysey's hand rested tenderly on George Macdonald's *Unspoken Sermons*. Praise Macdonald, and you will gain easy entrance into Mr. Voysey's heart.

Another free and breezy spirit—John Page Hopps. Extracts from Mr. Page Hopps's earlier writings are occasionally read in the course of the services at Swallow Street. But Mr. Page Hopps, like so many of us, has developed; and the development has tended towards that exaggerated Unitarian admiration of Jesus which Mr. Voysey untiringly protests against. For let it be noted that Theism sharply divides itself from Unitarianism, and the essential difference lies in the attitude towards Christian myth.

"One of my father's favourite books," said Mr. Voysey, indicating a leather-bound copy of Law's *Serious Call*.

I well remember reading it when a boy, though I had not then seen a companion book by Law on *The Spirit of Prayer*.

A much-esteemed work, *The Ideal in Judaism*, by Rabbi Morris Joseph, was flanked by a remarkable apology for the Hebrew rejection of Christ—*The Deicides*, by Rabbi Cohen, of Paris. With these may be connected *Aspects of Judaism*, by Israel Abrahams and Claude

Montefiore. The latter gentleman delivered one of the best courses of lectures in the Hibbert series. How profoundly interested Mr. Voysey has always been in Hebraism was amply attested by files of the *Jewish World* and *Jewish Chronicle*.

"I love him." The laconic utterance referred to Froude.

"Beautiful"—and I echoed the word; for it referred to Sir Edwin Arnold's verse-translation of the *Song Celestial*.

*Watts on the Mind*—we both smiled. People always smile at Watts, though indeed, he was, in his day, no mean psychologist. Then came Dr. Channing, and Theodore Parker, and Francis W. Newman, and Dr. Momerie. From Dr. Momerie, the orator of Princes Hall, it was a curious leap back to 1736, when James Foster, the Moravian, issued his Sermons against the Deists.

Kuenen—let the spirit of Rationalism salute the name—was present in the form of his *Prophets and Prophecy in Israel*. And Colenso—let the salute be repeated.

"Higher criticism, forsooth," exclaimed Mr. Voysey, as he looked with affection at the drab covers of the famous *Pentateuch*—"the Higher Criticism is now publishing and repeating the conclusions of Colenso, with never so much as a word of thanks to the dear old man! I knew him intimately. We were driving together one day, and I suggested to him that, having dealt with the Old Testament, he must carry the warfare into the field of the New Testament also. 'That's it,' Colenso cried out with emphasis and animation."

Would that the heretic bishop had lived to accomplish that second task! I heard with interest that Colenso showed his opinions significantly by issuing a hymn-book in which no praise-songs to Jesus Christ occurred.

*Supernatural Religion* we could both appreciate; as well as Amberley's *Analysis of Religious Belief*. Keim received no enthusiastic tribute. Nor the picturesque but unsafe Renan. Baur—yes, Baur had done an excellent work in his time, but now-a-days that species of criticism was but the picking of dry bones.

Dr. Samuel Davidson's *Introduction to the New Testament*—a fine achievement in criticism, which everyone should know.

In friendly silence Mr. Voysey passed Dr. Martineau's *Study of Religion* and *Seat of Authority in Religion*; but he was neither silent nor friendly when we ran up against Flint's *Theism*.

A much kinder tone greeted the writings of M. J. Savage, of Boston, though my host qualified his commendation with the observation that Savage was "too much of a Christian."

I confess to a feeling of blank amazement when Mr. Voysey spoke in disparagement of Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma*. Before I had time to remonstrate, however, I discovered, with a sense of relief, that at least we agreed in profound regard for Huxley.

Then Lyell's *Principles* came into view. Lyell and his wife were members of the Theistic congregation.

I hardly need say that we had a good laugh when we confronted Dr. Samuel Kinns, the friend of Moses. And when I learned that Mr. Voysey had dissected Kinns in the Langham Hall pulpit, I longed for a copy of the sermon. Whereupon Mr. Voysey turned to an index-book, ran his eye down the pages, and murmured, "Pious rauds; remarks on *Moses and Geology*, by Samuel Kinns; number 2, 1884." Then, turning to a nest of pigeon-holes, he extracted a pamphlet and placed it in my hands. Being myself a modest worshipper of the goddess of Method, I mention the incident as an instance of Mr. Voysey's business-like aptitudes. All his sermons for twenty-five years past are thus kept at beck and call. The orderly habit readily explains how the minister of the Theistic Church manages to get through such an immense amount of pastoral and literary work and correspondence.

"A good book"—this was the verdict on *The Four Gospels as Historical Records*.

I was sorry to hear of Mr. Arthur Bell's death. Mr. Voysey expressed a high opinion of his *Whence Comes Man?* which, a few years ago, made some stir in advanced circles. With a very much more popular work Mr. Voysey expressed very much less gratification. This was the prettily phrased but shallow *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*. Of Mr. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief* Mr. Voysey's judgment was, of course, more respectful, though stoutly adverse, on the ground that Mr. Balfour supported

the doctrine of the Incarnation. To quote from the Theistic leader's discourse in reply to the *Foundations*: "If God were to become incarnate in some human form, it would put a gulf between him and us which was not there before."

Leslie Stephen enjoyed a tempered approbation; Mr. Clodd—"a dear friend of mine," interjected Mr. Voysey—had his due meed; so also W. R. Greg. Kidd, of *Social Evolution* fame, did not stand on a supreme pinnacle.

Seeley's *Natural Religion*, scribbled o'er with many a vehement pencil-note, had evidently met with an indignant reception. The Theistic church, indeed, rang with strong words, of which "dishonesty" was one. Why dishonesty? Because Seeley preached Pantheism under the guise of natural religion, and Pantheism meant Atheism. For all that, Mr. Voysey could make a kind allusion to the authoress of *The History of Pantheism*, who, as the reader may have remembered from a previous "Chat," was none other than Miss Constance Plumptre. Talking of feminine writers, my host entertained a lively regard for the amusing *Social Departure*, a narrative of a tour round the world by two American ladies.

The Hibbert lectures occupied an honourable place. Max Müller's Gifford lectures appeared, and, while making qualifications, Mr. Voysey considered that Max Müller had done much good by throwing light on early religious thought. Of Jowett's *College Sermons* naught but praise was expressed. The late Edwin Hatch came in for eulogy; and I heartily chimed in, for Hatch's *Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church* is a most useful piece of research. Another independent thinker was William Ellis, whose *Philo-Socrates*, remarkable for the ability of its sustained Platonic dialogue on educational topics, was a cherished possession. Mr. Voysey knew Ellis personally. What a gulf between the staunch common sense of Ellis and the dreams of Swedenborg! Of the latter mystic several volumes presented themselves. To go further back, there was a quaint tome, a Greek lexicon once belonging to Gilbert Wakefield, who was imprisoned for heresy. To recede still more, we paused a few reverent moments before Milton's prose works. Remoter still in time, but close in point of sympathetic esteem, were the noble meditations of Seneca, Aurelius, and Epictetus.

I have nowhere seen a better set of the Thomas Scott tracts than in Mr. Voysey's library. What a zealous soul was Scott's! Let us yield him a grateful thought as we pass this long line of tokens of his propagandist earnestness. Mr. Voysey thinks better of Lillie's *Buddhism in Christendom* than I do. To Tolstoi he extended a sincere sympathy; to Ruskin, admiration; to *Lux Mundi* something like contempt.

When I came to note Mr. Justice Ameer Ali's work on Mohammed, Mr. Voysey observed with a quaint suddenness:—

“Ameer Ali? Yes; I married him.”

A few nooks in the shelves were allotted to lighter literature. Novelists did not figure largely. Thackeray did not please; at which I openly rejoiced. Dickens was preferred. Appreciation was recorded for the stories of Mrs. Craik and Mrs. Ewing; and (attend, Devonians!) for *Lorna Doone*. But as to George Eliot, well, *Silas Marner* and *Romola* might pass, but

“Sorrow it were, and shame to tell”

sensitive admirers of that authoress all that Mr. Voysey said of her tendency to expose unnecessarily the ugly aspects of human nature; while, nevertheless, he admitted her matchless power of delineation.

Ascott R. Hope, on the other hand, was extolled. And, as the *Guide* has readers in America, I may not neglect to name three authors of whom Mr. Voysey speaks in agreeable terms. The first is Oliver Wendell Holmes; another is Charles Dudley Warner, author of *In the Wilderness*, etc.; and the third is Mark Twain, whose clever satire, *A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur*, scathingly condemns the abominations of mediæval Europe.

Surely, the library proves that its owner abjures narrow-mindedness. We that decline his Theism willingly acclaim his sincerity. He and we employ different watchwords, and fight with different weapons. The spirit is not different.

## DR. STANTON COIT.

AMERICA gave Stanton Coit to England. Every man or woman who comes under Dr. Coit's influence feels grateful to America. Such Ethical missionaries (and the United States are breeding a noble school of Ethical prophets) help to forge unbreakable cables of friendship between this country and our kindred across the water.

One sunny June morning I discovered Dr. Coit, not ploughing like Elisha, but laboriously propelling a mowing-machine across his lawn. The fresh virility of his lectures may not be quite unconnected with the lawn-mower and the bicycle. Dr. Coit obeyed my suasive summons, and presently we sat in the happiest of nooks—a library. There were books enough to keep bookworms chatting for the livelong day. Yet I did not note any wealth of rare specimens and cherished first editions. That Dr. Coit's library has modest limits does him honour. In the great world, and in his work in the world, he finds so ample a field for the spending of both love and money that he has little left to devote to books. A subscription to the London Library, with its 200,000 volumes, ensures him all needful access to the treasury of letters.

By appropriate coincidence my eye fell first on the genial *Autocrat*.

"You knew Oliver Wendell Holmes?" I queried.

"Yes, very well. He sympathized with the humanitarian direction of the Ethical Movement. You may like to see this copy of the *Autocrat* which he gave me in 1892. On the fly-leaf you will notice, in his own handwriting, a stanza from *The Last Leaf*, a poem he composed in 1832. And here is a book of his poems which he gave me, and in which he marked for me all his favourites. Of all the verses he



had written he liked best, as he told me, one contained in the poem entitled 'My Aviary.'"

"Pray let me hear it."

Dr. Coit read:—

"O Thou who carest for the falling sparrow,  
Canst Thou the sinless sufferer's pang forget?  
Or is thy dread account-book's page so narrow  
Its one long column scores thy creature's debt?"

"In this verse," commented the Doctor, "is uttered the protest of his sweet humanity against the heartless dogmas of New England Puritanism."

Next we happened on the works of the prince of the shining circle of New England's thinkers—Ralph Waldo Emerson. Him, too, Dr. Coit had met.

"I knew him through Bronson Alcott, the father of Louisa. Alcott was a friend of my mother's, and stayed at our house. I met Emerson and his daughter at Amherst, in my student-days."

Student-days. The word easily led on to Dr. Coit's mental career, his three years' residence in Germany, his attainment of the Ph.D. degree in Berlin, his intimacy with the divine masters of philosophy—Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Leibnitz, Descartes, Locke, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer. Most of all we lingered over Plato. I hazarded the guess that the name of the illustrious Greek could be found in every modern writing which dealt with the higher modes of thought.

"His has been a marvellous influence," said Dr. Coit. "We might divide minds into two types, the Platonic and the Aristotelian. With the reasoning function the Platonic type combines the poetic, the intuitive, the artistic sense. That may account for the hold Plato has taken. Many who cannot follow abstract thought, and do not love it, can catch the meaning of Plato's poetic presentations, and are entranced by them."

"And Aristotle?"

"Aristotle's writings lack artistic structure. They are made up of short, blunt aphorisms—the best form, I think, for mere cold thought, but repellent to the ordinary mind."

Almost timidly I whispered the name of Hegel, fearing lest Dr. Coit might plunge with me into impassable morasses of speculation.

"In America," he remarked, "my teacher in philosophy had been Dr. Hickock, the leading Hegelian at that time in the States."

My heart sank. I braced myself up for a cloudy dissertation in praise of Hegel. But I erred.

"I went to Germany," continued Dr. Coit, "and soon accepted as true Schopenhauer's judgment of Hegel as the arch word-charlatan and sophist of the century. I think he was a great genius; but, with an insolent contempt for the common mind and common speech, he perverted the legitimate meaning of terms. He does not lack insight. Yet it seems to me that what scientific minds express honestly Hegel presents in brilliant and startling paradox. Hegelianism stripped of Hegel is good common sense."

Before we descended from the cool heights of metaphysics Dr. Coit gave a tribute of eulogy to Mr. G. F. Stout's recent work on *Analytic Psychology*.

With the greatest pleasure in the world I caught sight of Hausrath's *Time of Jesus*. Dr. Coit liked the book very much, but added:—

"In this department I count myself a student, and I humbly put myself into the hands of the latest historical scholars and critics whose methods are scientific. I do not pretend to original judgment, and I have no preconceptions. If, next year, historical criticism reconstructed the theory of Moses or Jesus, I should accept it tentatively."

We paused before a shelf on which glittered the names of Kuenen, Wellhausen, Robertson Smith, Driver, Montefiore, etc.

"I have been greatly helped and strengthened in my ethical faith," said the Doctor, "by the study of the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament. It is not only valuable as an application of the principle of historic evidence to religious documents, but it unintentionally lays bare Conscience and Conduct as the only abiding and precious element in Hebrew religion."

Caird's *Evolution of Religion* deflected the train of conversation to a more abstract line.

"The book is interesting," observed Dr. Coit, "as representing the right wing of Hegelianism in Britain. It shows how far the deeper religious thought of the British school

to-day has fallen away from the older theology. There is scarcely one remove in Caird's view of God from dogmatic Atheism. With Caird, the Absolute wakens into Personality only in man; and he virtually denies the Personality of God outside of man."

"And what distance lies between Caird and the Agnostic?"

"Caird asserts that knowledge is ultimate, and that experience is of the Absolute. The knowledge that all knowledge is relative cannot itself be relative. And his philosophy is based on the unavoidable premise that, if you know a part and know a phenomenon, you must know the whole and know the Reality—not perfectly, but adequately for knowledge."

From this aërial voyage I suggested a return to things mundane.

There lay on the table a group of books, French and English, relating to Moral Education, a subject to which Dr. Coit gives earnest consideration, and a subject which, to thoughtful minds, daily rises in significance. I noted Guyau's *Education and Heredity* (Contemporary Science Series), Forster's *Citizen Reader*, Felix Adler's *Moral Instruction of Children*, Mrs. Bray's *Elements of Morality*, Paul Bert's *L'Instruction Civique et Morale*, Ganneron's *Tu Seras Citoyen*, and the like. Ganneron's manual displays before the little citizen a highly graphic view of the phenomena of society, the work of public institutions, and the duties of the loyal citizen. In one woodcut we descry the thief stealing out by night; in another, happier suggestions are embodied in the fire-brigade and its noble service.

A sudden turn in the literary road brought us up against Lecky.

"Of course you like Lecky?"

Dr. Coit hesitated ominously.

"Lecky's *History of European Morals*," he replied, "I have always thought should have been named the 'History of European Immorals.' To scandal and court gossip he gives a spicy interest, and he shows little sense of the deeper morality and heroism of the people. And when he deals with Law he does not deal with moral character as embodied in the statutes, but rather furnishes details of individual violations of law."

"But what of the ethical preface to his History?"

"His 'Introduction,' which attempts to give an ethical theory, is beneath the attention of the student of ethics. He has nothing of insight like Green and Kant, nor critical analysis like Sidgwick, nor has he the disciplined judgment to weigh the good and the bad of an epoch."

"Perhaps you will be kinder to his new work on Democracy?"

"That shows again how superficial he is. I admit he has ample learning. It is not the scholar who is defective, but the thinker."

I sighed as I thus beheld the estimable historian reduced to unhappy fragments, and I changed the topic to poetry.

"I have always made it a literary rule," said the Doctor, "to spend but little time on second-grade poets, however charming and diverting."

"And which of the moderns receive your suffrage?"

"Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton; and, later, Wordsworth and Browning are the poets I know and love best."

Dr. Coit had the enviable pleasure of personal acquaintance with Browning, and, some six months before the poet's death, heard him read his *Andrea del Sarto* to a little group of admirers.

"When the poem was finished," said Doctor Coit, "a hush of awe and gratitude fell upon us half-dozen listeners; but Browning, as if remembering the constant charge against him of obscurity, and as if too modest to understand the meaning of our silence, broke it by asking in quick, sensitive voice: 'Did I make it clear?'"

"And will you not pay homage to Byron and Shelley?"

Let not the reader be wroth with me for faithfully recording the Doctor's iconoclastic answer:—

"Byron and Shelley seem to me, so far as the character of their thought is concerned, mere precocious boys and utterers of crude and half-formed conceptions. The spirit of their age laboured tumultuously in them—not clearly and self-consciously, as in Goethe and Schiller. Keats I love for the sensuous beauty of his language, but his message to the world was a boy's, not a man's."

As we passed along the shelves there scowled out upon us the apocalyptic *Course of Time*. Poor Pollok! once

famous in two hemispheres for his blood-curdling pictures of judgment to come.

"Besides Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the *Book of Daniel*," Dr. Coit said with a smile, "my mother used to read Pollok to me when I was a child, and I learned passages by heart"——

After a momentary halt of recollection, the Doctor recited for my amusement Pollok's denunciation of the most precious of metals :—

"Gold many hunted, swet and bled for gold  
Waked all the night, and laboured all the day.  
And what was this allurements, dost thou ask  
A dust dug from the bowels of the earth,  
Which, being cast into the fire, came out  
A shining thing that fools admired, and called  
A god ; and in devout and humble plight  
Before it kneeled, the greater to the less."

From Pollok we turned to another Scotchman—Carlyle.

"I never cared for Carlyle as I did for Emerson," Dr. Coit observed ; "his message could not fill the soul of young Americans as it did that of Englishmen. But Emerson's transcendental individualism was the timely antidote for the material individualism of America."

"But Margaret Fuller and the Transcendental circle of Boston made much of Carlyle?"

"Yes, intellectually ; but only certain sides of his teaching appealed to them. Except in the case of slavery, the Americans had little sense of righteous indignation, such as good men in England felt, against wrongs done to the people. Emerson escaped upwards ; he lived above the evils of life, and would have drawn all mankind beyond the clouds, whereas Carlyle meant to dispel the clouds. The Transcendentalists retreated to the settlement of Brook Farm. They did not penetrate the slums, or grapple with the reform of the laws."

"Emerson wrote an essay on *Man the Reformer*?"

"The reform he taught was spiritual—a reform of the soul."

Then we conversed on the prospects of rational culture, and our mental field-glasses swept the literary horizon.

"It is to be deplored," said the Doctor, "that at present the work of bygone liberal thinkers is passing out of men's

thought without having embodied itself in any great educational organization of Freethinkers. I am not referring to the most aggressive type of Rationalist authors, but to the schools represented by Matthew Arnold, Professor Seeley, Stuart Mill, Professor Clifford, Emerson, etc. I think Freethinkers might adopt a more thorough policy in educating the orthodox out of their orthodoxy. Mental progress should be secured, if possible, without violent shock or strain. Every teacher of children will accept this dictum. Devout young men and women should be first liberalized by acquaintance with such authors as I have named."

"And the next educational step?"

"After these should come philosophic writers. I once heard Professor Zeller, the great German historian of Greek philosophy, say to his students: 'No one who knows well the history of philosophy can accept the dogmas of theology as the truth of existence.'"

"Please continue your counsel to the Rationalist disciple."

"After philosophy in general should follow the study of non-theological ethics—Herbert Spencer, Professor Sidgwick, Immanuel Kant, Aristotle, and so on. The young thinker will then reconstruct the universe for himself."

We returned to the question of popular literature.

"In my view," observed Dr. Coit, "literature, like all art, is secondary to life; for to the man who does not keep his eye on real life within or about him his books must fail to yield up their best meaning, utility, and beauty. Instead of Matthew Arnold's dictum, or rather in addition to his dictum, that the Bible should be read like any other book, I should say that we ought to go to every great book as men used to go to the Bible. Literature should be levelled up to the Bible, rather than the Bible be levelled down to the plane of *Tit-Bits*. More depends on the spirit in which we read than upon the literature read—Greek, Hebrew, German, or English. Men who have learned to go to Shakespeare or Browning or Edmund Burke or Goethe for strength and light will find that these also are among the prophets. Or, again, take Thomas à Kempis. In him you find a fresh psychological insight into the moral life."

It struck me, as Dr. Coit spoke, that we seemed to need a new Rationalist Library of the Best Books, specially

selected from the whole realm of literature, and edited with a liberalizing purpose. I begged for more on the same theme.

"Nordau," said the Doctor, "closes his work on *Degeneracy* by suggesting that the Ethical Society of Berlin should form itself into a sort of academy of advice to the people with regard to new books. I agree with the idea. But advice regarding old books is still more needed. Ethical committees, consisting of men of advanced thought and catholic taste, could assist in guiding busy people in their reading, just as Mr. Frederic Harrison has helped many a solitary young student by his counsel. Instead of calling attention, by censure, to the forcible but morbid utterance of Marie Corelli and all her tribe, their function would be to keep the older and solider books to the front. Everywhere I should like to see Rationalists establish circulating libraries for the spread of such authors as the Higher Critics of the Old and New Testaments, Arnold, Emerson, Mill, Seeley, Kant, Hume, Huxley, and a score of others. The Higher Criticism of the Bible is officially ignored by the Churches, Roman and Anglican, and by all the sects, while it is studied and accepted in great part by the clergy in secret. With scholarship and historical accuracy as our auxiliaries, such a movement would educate the public out of theology into a natural, human, rational view of the meaning of life."

I had it on my tongue to beseech Dr. Coit to help this forward movement in literature by wielding his own pen. Eloquent speaker, convinced Rationalist, philosophic student, sympathetic expounder of the spiritual aspirations of the new age, he possesses the whole armour of light, and he owes the world a book that shall sound a call, and rouse the indifferent and marshal the forces. At present our library acknowledges but three debts to him—a little work on *Neighbourhood Guilds*, a translation of Gizycki's *Manual of Ethical Philosophy*, and a beautiful compilation of choice pieces under the title of *The Message of Man: A Book of Ethical Scriptures*. But while these are all we have in English, a volume has been published of fifteen of his lectures translated some years ago from manuscript into German by Professor von Gizycki. And from the German publication a Dutch translation has been issued, and is already out of print.

## DR. MONCURE D. CONWAY.

"You would like to see my library?" said Dr. Conway. "My library is not here. Some six or seven thousand of my books are over in New York"——

Crestfallen, I prepared for a brief and barren interview. Animated by the view of close-packed shelves and by the silent presence of the great masters, we could while away the hours with an interesting dialogue. But how to draw inspiration from New York? Whether I need have felt so dejected the ensuing pages will decide.

Dr. Conway, however, was able to display a not inconsiderable collection of books, many of them bearing on his present literary labours. The fourth volume of his edition of Paine's works was employing the nimble fingers of compositors; and the task of editing Paine, as the Doctor averred, equalled that of writing an original book. An oil painting of the author of the *Age of Reason* looked down upon us as if it were the presiding genius of the house.

Was George Washington also among the authors? My British eye fell with astonishment upon a rank of fourteen volumes of the writings of the Father of the United States (edited by Ford); but by "writings" one must understand letters, addresses, messages to Congress, despatches, and the like. Even so, one could not but be struck by the activity of Washington's pen.

I am too old an interviewer to retain any pretence at knowing everything I am shown, and when Dr. Conway pointed with pride to the *Life of George Mason* I confessed at once I had never heard of Mason.

"Many Americans would probably say the same," observed the Doctor. "Nevertheless, he was a great



constitutional authority. Patriotic American as he was, he would not sign the Constitution, when a member of the Convention that framed it."

"Why was that?"

"Because it was not Republican enough. He objected, as I have since objected [Dr. Conway was alluding to his *Republican Superstitions*], to those portions of the Constitution which dealt with the Presidency and the Upper Chamber, and he objected to the implied negation of substantial human rights. It was Mason who drew up the original draft of the Virginian Bill of Rights—you know," remarked the Doctor digressively, "that I am myself a native of Virginia State—and that Bill affirmed that 'religion, or that duty which we owe to our Creator, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence, and that therefore all men should enjoy the fullest toleration in the exercise of religion according to the dictates of conscience, unpunished and unrestrained by the magistrate; unless, under colour of religion, any man disturb the peace, the happiness, or the safety of society; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practise Christian forbearance, love, and charity towards each other.'"

The date of the Virginia Declaration was 1776.

— By a natural train of thought Dr. Conway passed on to the notable passage in the Tripoli treaty in 1796, when Washington dared to say that the Government of the United States was "not in any sense founded on the Christian religion." But when Jefferson became President, and the same treaty was to be renewed, the portentously liberal words were omitted. And Jefferson was a bosom friend of Paine!

With infinite respect I caught sight of four leather-bound volumes of Margaret Fuller's *Dial*.

"I got those volumes," said Dr. Conway, musingly, "through Emerson, when I was a young Methodist preacher"——

Methodist preacher! And it was the world-renowned Rationalist lecturer of South Place who spoke.

"I was then about nineteen years of age," continued the Doctor. "Emerson wrote me a very charming letter at the time. Emerson's own essays I used to carry in my saddle-bag on my itineraries. I also carried John Wesley's

works. And so Wesley and Emerson had to strive for the mastery."

"And Emerson triumphed?"

"Emerson triumphed."

How many readers of the *Guide* have heard of a fifth volume of the *Dial*? A fifth there was, though issued (1860) some ten years after the tragic death of Margaret Fuller (then the Marchioness Ossoli) on the beach of Fire Island. Dr. Conway himself edited this fifth volume, which Emerson honoured with several contributions, including the essay on "Domestic Life."

The beauty of the *Dial* was intrinsic rather than extrinsic. On the other hand, a remarkable book entitled *The Barons of the Potomack and the Rappahannock* openly rejoiced in its garnished cover and its Italian paper. Only 363 copies were printed of this rarity—one of the finest specimens of typography produced in America. Dr. Conway wrote this work for the Grolier Club, who, having divided up the copies among themselves, destroyed the plates in order to keep the volume rare. Among the chapters is one on the political history of tobacco. It was tobacco, he told me, that caused the first unpleasantness between the colonists and the Mother-country. The colonial clergy used to be paid in kind 16,000lbs. of tobacco yearly, and the legislature commuted their fragrant stipend into cash payments, much against their will!

Another literary curiosity was Delia Bacon's *Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare Unfolded*. A preface by Nathaniel Hawthorne warns the reader to expect disagreeable theories on the authorship of the plays; and, as a matter of fact, Delia Bacon has often been regarded as the originator of the fancy that Lord Bacon really wrote the immortal Comedies and Tragedies. Yet the text of the book breathes not a syllable of such a heresy! Dr. Conway's solution of the enigma is that the eccentric authoress (she died in a lunatic asylum) did actually moot the theory hinted at in the preface, but that the publishers suppressed it.

The Doctor took up with tenderness a thick volume, dated 1845, of *The Poets and Poetry of Europe*. It contains numerous translations from the French, German, Danish, etc., many of the pieces being from the hand of

Longfellow, who was assisted by Bowring, Costello, Herbert, E. Taylor, and others. It was a prized possession, for, as Dr. Conway said, it had opened up to him a wealth of European literature not easily obtained elsewhere. Another cherished relic was A. H. Clough's *Ambarvalia*. Two verses Dr. Conway indicated as lines which in days gone by had touched him with a pathos not easily explicable to the cool reader; and yet we all know how words may affect us which never thrill the world. They address the Deity:—

“If sure assured 'tis but profanely bold  
In thought's abstractest forms to seem to see,  
It dare not dare the dread communion hold  
In ways unworthy thee.

“O not unowned, thou shalt unnamed forgive,  
In worldly walks the prayerless heart prepare;  
And if in work its life it seem to live,  
Shalt make that work be prayer.”

Pleasant associations hung round a set of *The Borderer's Table Book*—a work presented to the Doctor on the occasion of his delivering some lectures in Sunderland at the time of the American Civil War. The *Table Book* enshrines many interesting north-country ballads, and a copy of it is now difficult and expensive to procure.

It would have been vastly strange if some token of William Johnson Fox had not appeared. The token was ample—twelve volumes. Dr. Conway pointed out to me how wonderfully these volumes reflect the passage of Fox's mind through various phases of faith—from conservative and moderate Unitarianism to a far broader plane of religious conception—always eloquent, affirmative, glowing, constructive; always holding on to old ideas until his hands were positively beaten back by the force of evidence.

“And you see,” said the Doctor, turning the pages of one of the volumes, “how, in these review-articles, Fox was the first to welcome young Tennyson, and the first to greet with appreciation Browning's *Pauline*. And here you notice how he expresses a suspicion as to whether ‘Disraeli the Younger’ was inspired by singleness of heart and purpose. Nobly and consistently Fox defended all who suffered for publishing heterodox works. In 1819, when Carlile was tried for selling the books of Thomas Paine,

Fox's was the only voice from the pulpit which proclaimed sentiments of toleration and liberty."

The fire of enthusiasm always glows in Dr. Conway's eyes when he comes to talk of the pioneers of free speech and free thought in the early nineteenth century, and he seems to see epical grandeur in the trial for blasphemy of Carlile and his wife, shop-boy, shop-woman, and some others who tried to carry on the business.

"When I think of those scenes in the old London courts," he said, "a feeling thrills me such as I experienced on re-visiting the battle-field of Gravelotte some years after I had followed in the track of the war as correspondent of a newspaper. Passing across the hills and through villages, I noted a ruin here, and a blackened spot there, which reminded me of the fierce fight of 1870. And so, when I pick up the old, time-stained pamphlets which English Freethought issued in its struggle for liberty seventy or eighty years ago, I seem to live in the midst of the conflict and hear the sound of battle."

Evidently Dr. Conway finds fascination less in a book *as* a book than in its human relation and significance. He stopped before a copy of John Wesley's *Journals*.

"That is the kind of book I love to read—a man's personal message—his heart speaks out from it. Another such book is the journal of George Fox the Quaker."

"Please tell me more about the books you like best."

"Well, let me mention Renan. His *Vie de Jésus* is not indeed perfect, though the last edition is a great improvement on the original; but the book is beautiful and tender, and helps to make Jesus stand out as a reality, a genuine historical figure. And then his *Historie du Peuple d'Israel*, that, too, is a very great book."

"And your other favourite authors?"

"Ah, but stay. I have not done with Renan. We must not forget his dramatic poems. You have read his *Caliban*?"

I was obliged to shake my head.

"One of the finest things ever written. It tells how Caliban raises an insurrection against Prospero, and establishes a democratic *régime*. He takes possession of Prospero's palace, surveys its splendid tapestried apartments, curls himself up in a luxurious bed, and then he, who has

been denouncing luxury, murmurs : ' After all, the populace are very precipitate ! ' And what a flash of humour is that in the story of a scientific syndicate persuading the people to invest them with authority, and the only thing they and the populace have in common is that they are both anti-clerical ! "

" Whom else would you recommend the young Free-thinker to read ? "

" I come back to Emerson. I don't know his equal. Twenty-five years before Darwin's great book appeared Emerson hinted at evolution, and saw in the seal's flipper what he called ' the brother of the hand, ' and spoke of the chain of being that connected the sponge with Hercules. Take his essays—those extending from 1838 to about 1870—and I know none equal to them for bracing up the heart and mind, and directing young men to a high standard of character. He was the forerunner of the ethical freedom which we enjoy to-day. Though we may not accept his philosophy literally, Emerson yet remains precious to us. "

" Pray add to the young Freethinker's list. "

" Let him read Max Müller for philology and studies in comparative religion. "

" And some popular books ? "

" One of the best books for the young reader who is just passing from the old orthodoxy to the newer thought is Dr. E. Abbott's *Kernel and the Husk*. Do not omit to make a note of Mr. Samnel Laing's admirable *A Modern Zoroastrian* and *Modern Science and Modern Thought*. And then there is that remarkable book, containing an immense amount of instruction and suggestion—Dr. James Martineau's *Seat of Authority in Religion*. "

" You have not included Huxley ? "

" Well, you know, Huxley was very deficient in knowledge of the Freethought movement since the days of Butler and Hume. He never mentions Thomas Paine in any of his works. He speaks of the Deists of the eighteenth century as *à priori* reasoners, forgetting that Paine used the inductive method. Paine, in fact, founded Huxley's own school. "

By way of change we turned to pictures. Sturdy old Thomas Stone's portrait confronted us. Stone, who was Conway's great-grandfather, signed the Declaration of

Independence as representative of Maryland. A large and rare engraving of Longfellow's splendid head graced another corner. I found the Doctor counted Longfellow among his personal friends, and I was led to ask the names of other distinguished men he had known. The catalogue I received by way of reply was a dazzling one.

"In America I knew Thoreau, Theodore Parker, Sparks the historian, Motley, Lowell, Bronson Alcott, Bancroft, Walt Whitman"——

Dr. Conway paused to show me a first edition of *Leaves of Grass*.

"Ah, and I must include brave old Mr. Gales. Gales was one of the founders of the church in which I ministered as a Unitarian in Washington. When a youth he fled from Sheffield to escape prosecution for helping to print Paine's *Rights of Man*; and he became one of the most eminent citizens of Washington."

"Let us cross to Europe."

"Europe? yes; let us see—Dr. Döllinger—Hermann Grimm—Curtius—Lepsius—Freiligrath. Strauss I knew very well. Renan"——

To have known Renan! Envable recollection!

"He was a beloved friend of mind, and visited me in London. Then there was Victor Hugo—Ledru Rollin—Charles and Louis Blanc"——

To Louis Blanc Dr. Conway dedicated his *Republican Superstitions*. They agreed in condemning a Second Chamber.

"Courbet—up there you will see one of his landscapes."

A peaceful rural scene indeed for so ardent a Communist to have limned.

"Of Italians I knew Mazzini intimately; and Venturi; Garibaldi but slightly."

With proper modesty I asked for the Britishers last.

"Cobden and Bright—Stuart Mill, George Henry Lewes, George Eliot, Mr. and Mrs. Bray of Coventry—Dr. John Brown—Dr. Guthrie—Dr. Hanna—George Gilfillan—Dean Stanley and Dr. Jowett—Mary Carpenter and her brother, Dr. W. B. Carpenter—the Rossettis"——

Dr. Conway brought out a copy of the famous little *Germ*, with its pre-Raphaelite etchings by Holman Hunt and others (1850). And he showed me two noteworthy

oil-paintings by Dante G. Rossetti—one the head of Christ surrounded by a halo (in reality a portrait of Burne-Jones); the other a sad-eyed daughter of sorrow looking upon a group of dancing children, while a repulsive grey rat, emblem of corroding sin and grief, burrows the soil at her feet.

We resumed the roll of fame.

"Professor Tyndall—William Call the poet, whom the law deprived of the guardianship of his dead sister's children because he had relinquished clerical orders and would not profess orthodoxy—Carlyle—Tennyson—Darwin"—

Well might the Doctor linger at that name.

"Somehow or other, those two personalities, Emerson and Darwin, stand apart in my mind like the two Pillars of Hercules."

The Doctor opened a little bookcase, and drew thence an unpretending volume of poetry—Browning's *Dramatis Personæ* (1864). It was a gift from the poet to Dr. Conway, and was the very first copy of the first edition. Also among the sacred relics the Doctor keeps a bound copy of the "revise" proofs of Browning's *Ring and the Book*, with the corrections in the poet's own hand. So close was the friendship that to Dr. Conway were committed the arrangements for securing the publication of Browning's poems in America.

Then we went to look at one more picture. It was that of Browning's face after death.

The light shone fair upon the white hair and noble brow. And on the face there flickered a marvellous smile.

## XIV.

### DR. W. C. COUPLAND.

"HERE, then, are my poets—Browning's *Ring and the Book*, *Red Cotton Night-cap Country*, and the rest"—

"You didn't know Browning personally, Dr. Coupland?"

"No. I have never sought opportunities for meeting the intellectual masters. You see I am not a hero-worshipper like"—

"Yes, like?"—

"Well, like the Americans."

I smiled responsive, and the American reader may take Dr. Coupland's jest as a compliment.

"And here are Tennyson, Swinburne—who often gives us more music than thought—Whittier, Shelley—I have Dowden's Shelley here, and greatly admire the author of *Queen Mab*; Shakespeare—look at this edition of the plays; I prize it much; Stockdale printed it in 1807; you will not often see Shakespeare in such splendid large type as in these six volumes. I am a Shakespearean enthusiast, you observe. You don't appear to approach the subject with warmth?"

I confessed I seldom pored over the poet's pages, though I regarded the poetic element as indispensable to a rational view of life. One might be poetic without a study of the bards.

"As for me," said the Doctor, "I often go for inspiration to the poets."

"But you are a metaphysician!"

"Well, yes. But the metaphysician is also a poet."

"Poetry and metaphysics!"

"Why not? The metaphysician who speculates on the ultimate realities that lie behind prosaic experience must needs be a *poietes*, a maker, a creator. He, like the poet, formulates thoughts, and expresses movements of the soul."

Sparkling with gilt letters stood a long series of Goethe's



*Werke* and the Transactions of the "Goethe Gesellschaft" of Weimar. I glanced down the list of members, which included Dr. Coupland's name.

"And here you are," I remarked, with an assumption of Republican vexation, "cheek by jowl with various crowned heads of Europe, whose names adorn the list."

"The royalty," retorted the Doctor, "is irrelevant. I do not object to co-operation with princes for a good object. When I was secretary of the English Goethe Society I did not class myself among the snobbish because Prince and Princess Christian were patrons."

I remembered that Dr. Coupland had demonstrated his critical appreciation of the great German poet in his charming essays on *The Spirit of Goethe's Faust*.

From Goethe to Heine; from Heine—what a strange leap!—to Lewis Carroll and his droll and mystical "Hunting of the Snark" in *Rhyme and Reason*. Dr. Coupland is not too much of a philosopher to enjoy *Alice in Wonderland* and *Sylvie and Bruno*. But perhaps Lewis Carroll is himself a philosopher in disguise. A graver sort of recreation was suggested by the bulky *Handbuch des Schachspiels* (Chess Handbook) of P. R. von Bilguer.

"So you are a chessman, Dr. Coupland?"

"Yes; and to this learned treatise on the theory of chess openings I resort for scientific instruction."

"A curious preparation for sport and recreation!"

"Chess is more than recreation; it is a science"——

On that ground, I suggested, it might be taught in Board schools.

"A science which demands perseverance, attention, foresight, self-control. But it has its drawbacks. It tempts one into over-absorption. There may be a chess inebriation, as there is of dram drinking!"

Dr. Coupland went on to amuse me by relating how he knew Henry T. Buckle as a chess-player, before he knew him as a historian of *Civilization*. Buckle, however, relinquished his beloved game when he devoted all his energies and capacities to the construction of his memorable book. Talking of Buckle, we crossed the room to a book-case which was entirely dedicated to the genius of Philosophy, and cognate subjects. The Doctor and I, like two generals, reviewed the literary troops.

"Blackwood's *Philosophical Classics*, Kant, Fichte, Hobbes, etc., a useful series;—my friend Belfort Bax's *Handbook to the History of Philosophy*; I agree with you that he presents a remarkable conjunction of the metaphysician and the Socialist; Kant's *Kritik of Judgment*"——

"A book not much heard of."

"It completed his system of thought. First came the *Kritik of Pure Reason*, then the *Practical Reason*; and then this on the æsthetic faculty."

"You are not a Kantian?"

"Everybody who philosophizes must be Kantian to a certain extent."

"And you are not an Hegelian?"

"I don't profess adhesion to any philosophical sect. But all who seek after a systematic view of the world must, in a measure, be Hegelian too. Here you notice Wallace's *Logic of Hegel* and Hegelian *Prolegomena*, Bradley's *Logic*, etc. Lotze and his *Mikrokosmos* I have little sympathy for; he aimed at re-establishing Theism by means of his metaphysic. The Jesuits do not neglect philosophy, as you will find by these books on *Logic* and *First Principles*, by Fathers Clarke and Rickaby."

Each author had the ominous "S.J." appended to his name. Always let the Rationalist suspect the combination of science and "S.J."

"A sober-minded man that," said Dr. Coupland, pointing to Wundt's volumes on *Logik*, *Ethik*, and *Grundzüge der Physiologischen Psychologie*; "and one who does not slavishly commit himself to any one school of thought. If you want more books on psychology"——

I confessed to an honourable desire for more.

"Here are Ladd, and Baldwin, and James, and Höffding, and Bain, and Perey on the *First Three Years of Childhood*, to which my old friend, Dr. Sully, wrote an introduction; and Dr. Sully himself is represented by his *Human Mind*, the *Outlines of Psychology*, and *Psychology for Teachers*. Ah! and here is his *Pessimism*."

In the preface to this latter book Professor Sully thanks Dr. Coupland for much welcome assistance, and especially for the compilation of a bibliography on Pessimism. I suggested that the labour of examining books on so

woe-begone a topic ought to have left the bibliographer in a state of deep depression."

"Not at all," laughed Dr. Coupland; "on the contrary, I rather enjoyed it. Now, here we are at Schopenhauer."

It was Haldane and Kemp's able translation of the *World as Will and Idea*.

"A disciple of Schopenhauer," continued the Doctor, "was Hartmann, whose *Philosophy of the Unconscious* you see here, translated by my hand, in three volumes. It took me three toilsome years to execute."

"A mysterious theme, this of the *Unconscious*. It reminds one of the 'unconscious cerebration' one reads of in Carpenter's *Mental Physiology* and the like."

"Hartmann," explained Dr. Coupland, "attempts to combine the schools of Hegel and Schopenhauer. To him the ultimate reality is the Absolute—not an anthropomorphic God like that of orthodoxy—not an Absolute that can consciously will or think, but a transcendental substance which works out in the two functions known to man as Will and Thought."

"But is that a happy name? The 'Unconscious' suggests swoons and death."

"No," admitted the Doctor, "I should prefer the term 'superconscious.' Of this superconscious reality, then, the universe is the visible and perceptible expression."

The intellectual atmosphere was getting rarefied, and the barometer was falling. I breathed more easily when Dr. Coupland descended to Comte's *Philosophie Positive* and *Système de Politique Positive*, and told me (what I rejoiced to hear) that he had ever felt well inclined towards the little church so brilliantly led by Mr. Frederic Harrison and Professor Beesly. But the Positivists, he added, lacked one thing needful: they had no place in their elaborate system for epistemology.

We sailed on to Ethical waters—to Plato and Aristotle (his *Ethics*, translated by Williams); and to Green's *Prolegomena*.

"I am not a Greenite," interjected the Doctor; "I don't, as is the manner of some, take him for the greatest light of recent times."

Then we stopped before the venerable Dr. Martineau's *Types of Ethical Theory*; and it came out that Dr. Coupland

had once been a pupil of the famous Unitarian divine at Manchester New College. A fellow pupil was Professor Upton, author of the Hibbert Lectures on *The Bases of Religious Belief*.

I bowed a bow of grateful assent when Dr. Coupland declined to laud Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*, and remarked upon its ultra-judiciousness and low speculative level. Nevertheless, the *Methods* is a work the student may not pass by on the other side.

"Here is the Scotch school," said Dr. Coupland; and I thought of a stone-built academy on the Grampians. But the "Scotch school" in question was embodied in an array of the works of Reid, Hume, Stewart, Brown, Sir William Hamilton, etc. Near by were ranged the philosophic tomes of Hartley, the two Mills, Mansel, Spencer, and the like. Then appeared a stately procession of Histories of Philosophy—those of Kuno Fischer, Schwegler, Cousin, Erdmann, Zeller, and last (least too, in Dr. Coupland's opinion) George H. Lewes.

Of works on theology or anti-theology the Doctor's shelves displayed but a meagre array; and the orthodox Paley and the zealous Tischendorf shivered in the uncongenial company of Strauss, Baur, Renan, Samuel Davidson, the *Decline and Fall*, and an imposing squad of twelve volumes of Froude's *History* and *Short Studies*. Froude was elbowed by Grote—

"Whose history," said I, "Ruskin thought worthy only of a bank-clerk."

"I should be happy to meet the bank-clerk who could write like Grote," replied the Doctor.

Special interest attached to a copy of Westermarck's *History of Human Marriage*. The Finnish professor is an intimate friend of Dr. Coupland, and wrote the greater part of his valuable anthropological treatise under the Doctor's hospitable London roof.

Travel-stained with our journey round the library, we sat by the fire; and I asked Dr. Coupland to enumerate a few useful books for the guidance of the young student in philosophy. He adjusted the headgear of consideration, and said:—

"Let him begin with psychology, and take up Sully's *Outlines*, which will leave him little to *un*-learn; Höffding's

manual, translated by M. E. Lowndes; and Professor James's two-volumed work. Then comes logic: Jevons' *Elementary Logic* is still useful for a beginner; and for Induction, Fowler, and, at a later stage, Mill. As to Ethics, we have the manuals of Muirhead and Mackenzie; these books are good, but should be supplemented by some more realistic and concrete treatment. We badly need an elementary text-book, written on the broadest possible basis, and free from even crypto-metaphysics; metaphysics should come afterwards. For any student Sidgwick's *History of Ethics* will be of use. As to general philosophy, there is a lack of a good introduction to the main problems, and the student had better pick up his knowledge from any standard history, such as Schwegler's, Ueberweg's, or Erdmann's. And he must beware of halting at the English Empiricists, Mill and Spencer. He should balance these writers with a study of Kant (Mahaffy's book on Kant's *Critical Philosophy for English Readers* will be of service), and the resulting drift of thought to Hegel, who can be approached through Wallace's essays and his edition of the *Logic*."

On all these subjects Dr. Coupland speaks as a traveller who has experienced adventures in all parts of the philosophic globe. He has scaled many an intellectual peak, and crossed many a speculative sea. Once a Unitarian minister, and sheltered in the serene valley of a conventional Theism, he set out, like Christian, on a far-reaching soul pilgrimage. Storm and stress have left their scars upon him; but with what brave cheerfulness he yet looks out upon the world we may read in his beautiful essay on *The Gain of Life*.

## MRS. M. GILLILAND HUSBAND.

FOR intellectual light, for ethical progress, for the liberation of the soul of Woman from social and moral obscurantism, Mrs. Gilliland Husband incessantly labours. She lectures with charm and acceptance. Her silver pen sends crisp articles, reviews, and pamphlets fluttering round the globe.

I closely scanned her library. Perhaps it would yield me the secret of her eloquence and her literary gift.

I trust I know good manners ; and so, ignoring the menial array of historians, logicians, and lexicographers, I made my way straight to the poets' corner, and rendered respectful obeisance. And first I saluted Edward Carpenter's *Towards Democracy* and *Love's Coming of Age*.

"Carpenter," said Mrs. Husband, "is one of the sweetest of souls, and one of the most chaotic of thinkers. He compels our love, and yet he aggravates us. He entertains the purest ideas on sex-questions, and writes exquisitely of life-long relationship between man and woman. Yet he fails egregiously when he tries to work out social applications of his ideas. I wish he would stop writing"——

"And do nothing but make sandals?"

"No, no, no. I wish he would stop writing *prose*. He is a poet ; a bird of Walt Whitman's splendid feather. We could spare many humdrum authors before parting with Edward Carpenter. You know his story of the poor tailor?"

My head shook a negative. Mrs. Husband called up the vivid scenes—the unhappy dreamer who sat cross-legged, drearily button-holing, in the stinking atmosphere of a crowded workshop, murmuring to himself that the universe revealed no God, no truth, no justice, no love, and trying to exclude the obscene jabber of his fellow-workers by conjuring up "the stories of other times and lands" that he had read in books. At a club he encountered a

sympathetic face, a fraternal hand. His new human friendship made the world a new place for him, took him out to fresh air, to rural life, to freedom, and song, and redemption. Mrs. Husband, who has assisted in the conduct of a young people's guild in the unæsthetic alleys of Drury Lane, has often penetrated into tailor' dens, and knows the unloveliness of their aspect.

"There are truth and strength," she said, "in the poet who can find beauty in such surroundings ; but, indeed, it is never very far off where human courage and love are."

"Behold Swinburne."

"Ah," observed Mrs. Husband, "I look to the poets for beauty and passion. Swinburne does not know what true passion is."

"Will you not allow him any merit?"

"Music."

"Mere verbal music?"

"Well, more than that, for he is a poet ; and he has said some magnificent things in his revolt against theology."

We passed along, nodding recognition to the bards :—

"Kingsley—one of the heroes of my girlhood ; I once enthusiastically exclaimed that I would be willing to die that very minute for the pleasure of meeting Kingsley in heaven ; and one of my friends humorously inquired if I was sure I could count on an introduction ! Shelley—*dear* Shelley. Longfellow ; I once had a sort of affection for him ; and he is very sweet, but—but. Wordsworth ; he is much to me ; but I had to grow older before I could appreciate his view of the spirituality of the universe. For a time my Agnosticism prevented that appreciation—indeed, while it lasted, it robbed me of my poets."

If Mrs. Husband had not been talking of the poets, I should have cried a halt. But interruption meant irreverence.

"Coleridge ; fantastic, rich ; a poet, and therefore to be loved ; but never a favourite of mine. Burns and Goethe ; let us put them together ; their songs are for all the world ; they both knew what passion was, and tenderness."

"And would have understood one another?"

"Yes, on certain planes. Goethe would have understood Burns's songs, and Burns would have understood Goethe's lyrics."

"You admire Pope?"

Mrs. Husband's vehemence startled me.

"Hateful; horrible! That copy of Pope is not mine. It belongs to my husband; and I wish he would consign it to the oblivion of a dark corner. Pope has no insight. He is a rank Philistine. His attitude to women is odious!"

I hurriedly changed the subject to Milton.

"Yes, a magnificent poet and inspiring politician. But how much harm he did to the sacred cause of rational religion. He placed poetry at the service of a narrow orthodoxy. His Satan is a hero; his God uninteresting."

I made sure of better success with Chaucer.

"Chaucer," repeated Mrs. Husband, with withering coolness; "well, a comfortable, middle-class sort of creature!"

This undermining of the English Parnassus made me desperate, and I sullenly pointed to Spenser. Mrs. Husband's severity relaxed, and she uttered words of lingering endearment for the bright allegories of the *Faery Queene* and the stately music of the *Epithalamium*. Nor when I named Shakespeare (for in these iconoclastic days one must take nothing for granted) did she withhold her tribute—"King o' a' the poet race," she said, adapting Burns.

Of course Browning crossed our path. He was embodied in a complete collection of first editions. Mrs. Husband received, with indignant surprise, my depreciating remarks on Browning's stammering method. She seized the *Ring and the Book*, opened at the dedicatory page, and read the well-known "Posy":—

"O lyric love, half-angel and half-bird,  
And all a wonder and a wild desire,  
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun," etc.

I sat in moody silence until Mrs. Husband, more in sorrow than in anger, replaced the volume on the shelf. But my interest revived when she lapsed into autobiography, and told how, after Scott and Byron had lost their first attraction, and school-life had closed, she wandered disconsolate on the spiritual road. Then came the influence of Carlyle. To her, miserable in her inability to find the solution of the world's heavy enigma, he spoke strong and helpful words. And then reinforcement arrived from Browning and Tennyson.



For the latter there was meet gratitude, but of lesser strength; for how different was the sweet ring of Tennyson from the fine masculinity of Browning. But of none had Mrs. Husband more tender words to say than of Goethe—the profound seer, who portrayed with matchless skill the earnest strivings of the human soul.

Presently we happened on Matthew Arnold.

“One loves him,” observed Mrs. Husband, “and one feels sorry for him. ’Twas evening with him, ‘and the glimmer of twilight—never glad, confident morning again.’”

We argued for a while on Ibsen, for whom Mrs. Husband cherishes intense regard. And when I objected to his preference for the repulsive aspects of life, she insisted that Ibsen’s was one of the strongest voices on the side of morality. When he chose the method of holding up the ugliness of sin, it was but one way of displaying the beauty of holiness.

Here let me note that Mrs. Husband has published an ably discriminative lecture on *Ibsen’s Women*.

We spent a pleasant quarter of an hour among the Ethicals.

“Here you have Leslie Stephen’s series of lectures on *Social Rights and Duties*. The book is perfectly charming. I don’t agree with the philosophical point of view; but I know no book which I would more gladly put into the hands of young persons not yet intellectually emancipated. Here they will get, not theory, but wisdom. Mackenzie’s *Manual of Ethics* will, I hear, soon reach the third edition, which it deserves. Muirhead’s *Manual of Ethics* was first in the field; he is one of the most painstaking and sympathetic of teachers. Sidgwick’s *Methods of Ethics*—extremely good, though painfully balanced; one longs at times that he would relapse into a little enthusiasm. He is the most respectable of the Utilitarians.”

The Educationists marched by.

“Froebel, the greatest educational reformer. A true genius, Herbart; his *Science of Education* is most interesting; somewhat too mechanical; good to read, but not to swear by. Here is my friend Mrs. Bryant’s *Studies in Character*. She is one of our most distinguished educationists—bright, capable, and subtle.”

We now found ourselves among the philosophers—all

grave and reverend seigniors. I could not fail to note the warm esteem—nay, enthusiasm—with which Mrs. Husband spoke of the master who had taught her to love Plato and Aristotle—Dr. Bernard Bosanquet, the eminent author of a *History of Æsthetic*, a *Logic*, *The Civilization of Christendom*, etc.

“If you want an easy introduction to social philosophy,” said Mrs. Husband, “you will find one in Mackenzie’s *Introduction*. It is popularly and brightly written. Some people have told me it is the only philosophic book they could read.”

“You have given Berkeley a place of honour.”

“Yes ; he was an Idealist, and—he was a countryman of mine.”

Of Hegel—also an Idealist, though he had not the good fortune to be born in Ireland—Mrs. Husband spoke as of a man among men ; and some readers will be glad of her suggestion that the pleasantest approach to Hegel lies through Bosanquet’s translation of his *Introduction to the Philosophy of Fine Art*.

But how did the lady become a Hegelian ?

She had turned away, dissatisfied, from the Agnosticism of Spencer, which, in her case, had followed on the scepticism of Hume. In Germany she studied Herbart, Lotze, Dröbisch. The outlook was still dispiriting, the way devious. A friend mentioned T. H. Green’s *Prolegomena to Ethics*. She opened Green, read with avidity, pondered his pages for a year, then plunged again into Kant and Hegel, and emerged from the process an Idealist.

“It felt,” said Mrs. Husband, “like a resurrection from the dead. The point of view gained was as delightful as it was unexpected.”

And so Christiana had reached the land of Beulah.

When my suppressed Agnosticism found vent in a complaint that Green adopted the terms of theology, Mrs. Husband replied that he used the expression “God” in a sense Idealistic and far removed from the orthodox significance. She added, with a smile, an anecdote of a young Welshman to whom she had lent a copy of the *Prolegomena*. He disliked Green’s “God,” and inquired if some scientific phrase could not be invented in substitution !

Mrs. Husband had burned incense at many shrines ; but

I found she had yet a store of the fragrant offering left, specially reserved for Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, a work which she eulogized with adjectives sufficiently glowing to kindle in the coldest breast a desire to study metaphysics.

Metaphysical ladies are so uncommon that I feel it my duty to record my observations with the minuteness of a scientific explorer. I therefore make known that Mrs. Husband does not find Hegelianism and novel-reading incongruous. But who was the elect author? I made inane (but happily unspoken) guesses at Mrs. Radcliffe and Wilkie Collins. It turned out to be Meredith, whose works I found enshrined in the loveliest of turquoise leather.

"He is my novelist of novelists. To me he stands as greatest. He sees life steadily, and sees it whole. He puts truth first: that is his supreme merit. He is a profound lover of beauty; and one always meets in his works a sympathy with the healthy and the sound."

And Irish readers will thank me for including a reference to O'Grady's *History of Ireland*. It deals, as Mrs. Husband told me, with the heroic period, and ably depicts the best Celtic qualities—manly friendship, feminine purity, and sensibility to the influence of ideals.

When, finally, Mrs. Husband was good enough to open out to me the salient features of the Idealistic philosophy, I listened, if not with conviction, yet with infinite respect.

"Idealism," she said, in conclusion, "means not only intellectual satisfaction, but moral and spiritual refreshment and strength. It professes that in the understanding of the every-day facts and relations of life it finds the assurance of ultimate Reason and Goodness."

## PROFESSOR J. H. MUIRHEAD.

NOT for light conversation on the latest novel, or in expectation of the easy twitter of popular art criticism, did I repair to Mr. Muirhead's study. I doffed the coat of many colours which, in my frequent chats with authors, I have so often worn to fit my character of literary loungeur. Clad in the sober livery of philosophy, I approached Mr. Muirhead at least as gravely as the student who knocked at the door of Dr. Faustus. The Editor of the *Library of Philosophy* submitted, with the greatest good nature, to my examination. And, knowing that no man is better qualified to speak on the position and prospects of philosophic thought in this country, I did not spare my questions.

I opened fire by asking which school of philosophy appeared to be in the ascendant.

"Idealism, without a doubt," replied Mr. Muirhead. "The chairs of philosophy throughout this country are, for the most part, occupied by men whose ideas are distinctly Idealist. All the recent appointments in the Scotch universities—let us say within the last ten years—have been made in favour of Hegelians or Neo-Kantians, with the exception of one case, where a local man was chosen over the heads of better candidates."

Idealism, I thought, bade fair to sweep the board; but Mr. Muirhead had not concluded the tale of conquest:—

"In the smaller colleges of England, such as Liverpool, Cardiff, Bangor, and Owen's, the chairs of philosophy are in possession of thinkers who have been largely influenced by German Idealism."

Was all this the result of a huge Hegelian conspiracy? Such was my unspoken query; but, aloud, I asked Mr. Muirhead how he accounted for this preponderance.

"The Hegelians," said Mr. Muirhead significantly, "happened to be the best men."

"But Cambridge has its Utilitarian Sidgwick?"

"Well, Cambridge is the exception which proves the rule. For even there the younger men, such as McTaggart and Stout, are distinctly identified with the Idealist school."

"And what of Oxford?"

"The most important educational appointment of Oxford—the mastership of Baliol—is held by Edward Caird."

I thought to lessen Mr. Muirhead's exultation (for it *was* exultation) by shifting to London.

"Here in London," he rejoined, "Professor Sully is more conspicuously representative of philosophy than anyone else."

"And he"——

"He is not *anti*-Idealist. He is not against us, and he who is not against us is for us."

"But are we not donning German old-clothes, while Hegelianism is losing ground in the land of its birth?"

"It is not true," returned Mr. Muirhead, "to say that Hegelianism is being discarded in Germany. Lotze, for example, is still held in honour there, and he was much influenced by Hegel."

"I must confess that you Idealists dominate the Universities. But do the Universities represent the best British thought?"

"At one period of this century," admitted Mr. Muirhead, "the great thinkers stood outside the Universities—such as Grote, Mill, Spencer. That is not the case in the present day, though there are, of course, some distinguished men of letters who, though themselves University men, are not identified with University teaching. I might quote Mr. Leslie Stephen and Mr. Frederic Harrison."

"And has this triumphant Hegelianism left any mark on the Church?"

"It has had one very remarkable effect," observed Mr. Muirhead, "and that is the complete disappearance of the Broad Church"——

I waited in some astonishment for the solution of the enigma.

"In this way: the new movement has taken hold of people who have refused to go into the Church. They find it too radical to permit them to enter the Church's orders."

It absorbs the elements which would otherwise have contributed to the maintenance of the Broad Church party."

"Perhaps you will also claim that Idealism has impressed itself on our literature?"

"Yes," said Mr. Muirhead imperturbably, "it has done so since the days of Coleridge and Wordsworth on to the time of Matthew Arnold. Carlyle acknowledged its power. Browning is its great popular exponent. It has left traces on Tennyson—*e.g.*, in the 'Higher Pantheism.'"

"But don't you take account of Huxley?"

"Huxley never showed much interest in what is properly called philosophy, except in his *Hume*, and he nowhere touches deeply on its problems."

"Idealists do not appreciate the Unknowable of Mr. Herbert Spencer?"

"They are its most relentless critics. To assert that it is unknowable is to assert a knowledge of it. Idealism affirms that there can be no object that is not relative to a subject. An Absolute object or Unknowable object is a contradiction in terms."

"Then do you go so far as to say"——

"Idealists do not say they know the Absolute. But we say that all knowledge is a progress *towards* a knowledge of the Absolute, while, to Spencer, knowledge is permanently shut up in the field of the relative."

"But is not all our knowledge relative?"

"Undoubtedly."

"And you say we never can, as a matter of fact, do more than travel *towards* a knowledge of the Absolute?"

"That is so."

"Then," I pursued, "does it not still remain to you, as to Spencer, the Unknowable?"

"Put in that way, it does seem a riddle," said Mr. Muirhead. "We know It and we know It not. But is it not the same with art and morality? An artist tries to express Beauty in a picture, but the Beauty he dreamed of has escaped him, or he has only expressed a part of it. So with morality: we fail in living up to our ideal, yet we do not say it is an unrealizable ideal, any more than that beauty is inexpressible. The picture and the action bear witness to the reality of Beauty and Goodness, though they fail to express the whole. It is the same with knowledge. All

knowledge is knowledge of the Real. In knowing anything we know the Absolute. Yet it remains true that we only know in part. In recognising it as a part we show that in some sense we know the whole."

Half dubiously, I questioned as to whether Idealism in any way linked itself with politics.

"I look to Idealism," explained Mr. Muirhead, "as providing a basis for the newer Liberalism."

"What is this basis?"

"The idea of freedom as consisting not merely in the liberty of every man to do as he likes, but in the power of each man to do something that is worth doing. Hence the function of the Liberal politician is to develop capacity in the citizen. Spencer sets up the State *versus* Man; Idealism, on the other hand, affirms, with Aristotle, that 'the State is prior to the individual,' and that 'man is a political animal.' It is the citizen within man that we are called upon to develop. Government does not simply exist in order to secure liberty and the spread of contentment. Government should develop a spiritual *discontent*, and then satisfy the created want as far as is reasonable."

"And do you put aside the old democratic idea of self-government?"

"That is an element in the freedom, but does not constitute the freedom."

"Then it is only a means to an end?"

"I don't exactly say that. The self-government is a means in so far as it tends to the betterment of material surroundings and the spread of capacity. But the power to take part in the civic activity is not only a means; it is in itself a part of the Good Life. I hope to see this idea more and more take hold of our younger politicians. The man by whom it is, perhaps, most consciously grasped is Mr. Haldane. He is one of our few philosophic politicians. He is a Hegelian."

These revelations made me inquire if any literature were available on the subject of political philosophy, as interpreted in the light of Idealism.

"The best book," answered Mr. Muirhead, "is Green's lectures on the *Principles of Political Obligation*. It has, perhaps, exercised a stronger influence on the younger generation of political writers than any other."

"Then a Hegelian must be a Liberal?"

"Yes. Hegel declared that he and his followers demanded progress. Their watchwords would be Reason and Freedom; and their rallying-point would be the Invisible Church."

"The Invisible Church? He meant a sort of Platonic Republic, I suppose."

"Well," said Mr. Muirhead with a smile, "he didn't mean the *visible* church."

"Does Idealist Liberalism run on all-fours with popular Liberalism?"

"No. Hegelians are sometimes called upon to oppose tendencies which some people may think identical with Liberalism. As a matter of fact, Hegelians have uttered some of the most trenchant criticisms on the current Socialism. And, with regard to Social Science in general, Idealism emphasizes the need of a psychological and ethical basis for political and economic theory."

"Would you have elementary philosophy taught in schools?"

"No, except so far as the way would be prepared by a cultivation of thoroughness and sincerity."

Then we fell to talking about one or two of the most popular books in the *Library of Philosophy*. Mr. Muirhead invited me to crack that tough metaphysical nut, Mr. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*.

"When opening that book," admitted Mr. Muirhead, "it might seem to many readers like taking a mouthful of sand. Others, who have had some training in the subject, find it, as they have told me, 'read like a novel.' It is, as a matter of fact, one of the most important books published in the last twenty-five years."

"Does it strike out a new departure?"

"No; it is critical and almost sceptical in its method."

"After Mr. Balfour's manner?"

"No. Bradley's scepticism rather resembles that of Socrates. He examines in order to go forward. Mr. Balfour examines in order to check progress. Bradley says that Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what one believes upon instinct; yet to find these reasons is no less an instinct. He urges that all our knowledge is one. To know the part truly is to know the whole, as Tennyson suggests in his—

'Flower in the crannied wall.'



The Master of Baliol once said to me that this book was like a knife which was all blade : it is apt to cut you. No one could read the book without looking at the world in a very different way henceforward."

"Would you tell me shortly the plan of the book?"

"It pursues an examination of familiar ideas, like Space, Time, Body and Soul, Goodness and Evil ; and the question it asks about each is, Is it real, or is it merely appearance? And the test of reality here, as always, is Self-consistency. Can our idea of space be made consistent with itself? How can space be conceived of both as infinitely divisible and as not infinitely divisible—as a whole and not as a whole? Is it logical to think that, as Lucretius said, we can go to the farthest bound and throw a dart, and there is still a Beyond?"

"This seems to be an intellectual No-thoroughfare. Pray proceed."

"Having found the conception of Space, Time, etc., break down, we are not to imagine that each does not, in its own way, possess a *degree* of reality. After finding that we cannot grasp reality, even in the conception of Soul, Bradley repents, and tells us that, nevertheless, in the ideas of the Soul, etc., a degree of reality remains. And, of course, the human Soul has an immensely greater degree of reality than abstractions like Space, Time, and Matter."

"So we are not sent empty away?"

"No. But in the end Bradley is more like Spinoza than Hegel. His Absolute is something like the lion's cave—all the footsteps go towards it, and none away. The Absolute in Hegel, on the other hand, is always conceived of under the form of self-consciousness of the Highest in ourselves. Bradley would not admit that we could ever know the Absolute. Hence your remark a little while ago on the relationship between Spencer's Unknowable and the Absolute of some Hegelians has a certain justification in Bradley. But Bradley freely criticises Spencer, and says of his religious attitude that 'it seems a proposal to take something for God simply and solely because we do not know what the devil it can be.'"

"As an Agnostic I object to the Hegelian mode of allusion to God as a human personality."

"Well, that is the best way in which we can conceive of

the highest we know—as a self-conscious Individuality. That secures the best picture of it, so to speak. Hegel once said we could not be anthropomorphic enough. If we conceive of God in any lower category than that of self-consciousness, we might as well take to fetish worship at once.”

“Then Idealists have a theology?”

“Well, in Idealist philosophy what we call Metaphysics would correspond to theology. It is the science of reality as a whole. God is the whole. What we require of theology is that it should be disinterested. When a science becomes apologetic, it is no longer a science.”

Having, in our literary voyage, traversed the difficult passage of Bradley Strait, we now emerged into the open waters of Stout Sea—in other words, we discussed Stout’s *Analytical Psychology*.

“This work,” said Mr. Muirhead, “brings us directly into contact with present-day psychology. It is certainly a great advance upon Professor Bain and the Associationist school. Stout has done psychology a great service by keeping it clear from the physiological element. Hegelians have no objection to the introduction of the physiology of the senses as likely to throw light upon the nature of sensation. But physiological processes can throw no light whatever upon the nature of judgment, and inference, and the relation of language to thought—all the more serious questions of psychology must be dealt with on the basis of psychological analysis.”

“In Stout’s psychology what has become of the Will? It seems to have disappeared.”

“Stout would be surprised to hear you say that. He holds strongly that the mind is essentially active, as against a group of psychologists who deny the activity of the mind, and would resolve it into a mere succession of passive states—a school to which Bradley, perhaps, belongs.”

“But he does not treat the Will as a separate division of mental activity?”

“No; and no modern psychologist will talk of the Will as if it were a sort of jumping cat. He takes the mind to be an organic whole, and suspects the use of the word ‘Will’ as if it explained anything. Such words should not be employed as if they signified independent powers or

faculties of the mind. Stout does not even admit Bain's 'feeling of activity'—such as we seem to have when we lift a weight—as an unanalyzable datum of consciousness."

I took compassion on Bain. "Will not Bain's work, with its observation of the association of ideas, still be an aid to practical teachers?"

"Yes," assented Mr. Muirhead, "I think a knowledge of the Laws of Association, as expounded by Mill and Bain, is of great practical use, just as a knowledge of the Linnæan system of plants may be of service to the modern botanist. But I think it is doubtful whether the old psychology, as a whole, would not tend to confuse a man who had recourse to it for practical purposes. Surely it is essential that a teacher should regard the mind as an organic whole. And the whole doctrine of Apperception, which is quite foreign to the English Associationist school, must be made the root of all sound education. The centre-piece of Stout's work is the exposition of the theory of Apperception."

"You know," said I, changing the subject, "that some Rationalists mistrust your Idealist tendencies."

"Oh, yes," replied Mr. Muirhead, "they think we are forsaking the scientific for the metaphysical method. In that attitude they are directly or indirectly influenced by Comte's Positivism. Karl Pearson, in his *Grammar of Science*, attacks metaphysicians. He believes we are thorough reactionists. Yet, strange to say, he cannot shake off metaphysics. His own book is an excellent metaphysical work, written in order to show there is no such thing as metaphysics."

"What, then, is the limitation which besets science?"

"By its very nature, science has to shut out certain elements of reality. For instance, physical science shuts out mind. Mathematics shuts out everything but space and number. We maintain that things must be viewed in the whole complex of their relations. In explaining sound, you must not take the vibrations of the atmosphere alone. You must include the sensation of sound, and you must supplement physics with psychology. Philosophy tries, as it were, to see things *together*. Plato described the philosopher as the Synoptic Man. Science confines itself to abstractions, and is right in doing so. Philosophy tries to get back to the concrete."

"This," I exclaimed, in much amazement, "is a paradox!"

"Yes, but it is true," persisted Mr. Muirhead. "Science splits things up into their various aspects—chemical, mechanical, mathematical. Science is analytic; philosophy is synthetic. But philosophy, when it knows its business, never opposes science. It recognises that its material is brought to it by science, that it can only be set going by science. All it insists upon is that the world is a coherent whole, and that, after going through the process of scientific analysis, we must reconstruct all our analyzed world."

"Some people fear that metaphysics may be used to bolster up old creeds."

"I am not sure that philosophy has not sometimes justified the fear. But it cannot be said of the present-day English philosophy that it is in any sense apologetic for decaying dogmas. And I think we may look in the future for a much better understanding between scientific men and philosophy. Philosophers should have a training in science, and scientific men should have a training in philosophy."

Nothing could be more graceful than this offer of the olive-branch. I trust the chemists, biologists, and the other scientific gentlemen will muster up sufficient chivalry to respond to Mr. Muirhead's terms of peace. I will venture to say he is a plenipotentiary of the highest standing. For no man in these islands has striven more zealously to render philosophic thought effective, or aimed more disinterestedly at the spread of ethical hygiene.

## MR. THOMAS WHITTAKER.

THE windows of the literary workroom looked out towards Regent's Park and that expanse of North London where the streets serenely suggest intellectual culture, and the villas have an air of relationship with art and science. In this tranquil *atelier* I spent some hours of an April day. The occupant insists on describing himself, in the portentous but graphic English of a French novelist, as a *strugforlifeur*. He does not, however, profess to be always rolling the stone of Sisyphus, and was willing to expatiate on things in general, and half-a-dozen books on his shelves in particular.

A glance at Croom Robertson's posthumous volumes easily attracted us into the cloistered walks of philosophy. We had not proceeded far when we found ourselves in that dim religious quarter which is sacred to the Hegelians.

"I saw in one of your recent 'Chats,'" remarked Mr. Whittaker, "that you suspected the existence of an Hegelian conspiracy to capture all the professorial chairs in Britain."

"Yes, yes," I cried, flaring up in expectancy of revelations.

"There is some historical foundation for the suspicion. You see the Hegelians, owing to their use of theological terms, find it less difficult to secure the favour of the public."

"But they are not Christians."

"Of course not. But it was in that way that Hegel himself captured all the university chairs in Prussia. His followers were supposed to be friends of orthodoxy. For that reason a Hegelian once confessed to me that Hegel was, in some respects, an immoral person. He propounded doctrines in terms not understood in their true sense by the ordinary man."

"You mean he had an esoteric teaching as well as public?"

"No; but he adopted theological terms which would necessarily be misinterpreted by the general public."

"However that may be, Hegelianism is now the ruling official philosophy?"

"Yes. It is all part of the reactionary movement."

"You will acknowledge the English Hegelians have an admirable text-book in Green's *Prolegomena*?"

"I agree that the *Prolegomena* is one of the greatest ethical treatises of the nineteenth century. At the same time, I fancy some members of the school are in danger of coming to think that that book and the *Introduction to Hume* sum up all philosophic wisdom, and I am sometimes tempted to class them zoologically as"—

"As what?" I asked, seeing Mr. Whittaker hesitate.

"Well, as *Green parrots*."

I could afford to smile, not being an Hegelian.

"You think, then, there is a great gulf fixed between Green and our other British schools? Take, for instance, Leslie Stephen's *Science of Ethics*."

"Mr. Stephen has a great deal in common with Green."

"What will you say of Sidgwick's *Methods of Ethics*?"

"A disproportionate amount of casuistry in it as compared with ethics proper," answered Mr. Whittaker curtly.

"And Spencer, and"—

But Mr. Whittaker cut the discussion short.

"I am inclined to agree with Hume that the ancients were the best moralists. I don't think Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* has ever been surpassed. There was this merit in the ancients: they put mechanism—especially all that relates to economics—in its proper place, and subordinated the means to the end."

"Lately," said I, "I have listened to a series of lectures by Dr. Stanton Coit, in which he affirmed that no movement in favour of economic improvement can succeed until it becomes an idealist movement, and seeks to effect an ethical change."

"That position, as well as its converse, was anticipated," said Mr. Whittaker, "by the ancient philosophers. They argued that you could not have an ideal individual except in an ideal State. According to the view I adopt, you must modify economic conditions to suit your ethical ideal. If you find that any economic system does not allow scope for

the ethical life, you must alter it as far as this is permitted by the nature of things."

We took breath after this plunge into the region of social problems, and scanned a shelf of poets—Wordsworth, Shelley, Swinburne, Matthew Arnold, Dante——.

"Need Freethinkers read Dante?" I broke in.

"They ought. Dante's *Divine Comedy* is the most completely architectonic of all human compositions. It displays an immense constructive faculty, building up a whole intellectual system, and yet transmuting it all into poetic form. Though there is so much individual detail in it, there are no unorganized masses of intractable matter. It has been said that Milton is the intensest of English poets. Dante, I should say, is the intensest of all poets."

"With such a Dante could the Middle Ages be really dark?"

"The true dark age was from the fifth to the eighth, or perhaps the tenth, century. It was the sixteenth-century writers who first gave the Middle Ages their bad reputation. Spenser, in his *View of the Present State of Ireland*, written near the end of that century, spoke of Ireland as not being yet quite civilized; but that, he explained, was not surprising, since England itself had been civilized only about a century and a half. This was not quite a fair view of the mediæval period, though it is intelligible that the contrast between the mediæval and the modern worlds should at first have presented itself in that way. The Middle Ages were not barbarous, as the scholars of the Renaissance thought; but, of course, those ages differed in their conception of life from classical antiquity, which, at the Renaissance, was recognised as the true type of civilization. Our modern life really approximates more to the ancient than to the mediæval type. Such has been the cycle of European history—first an era in which the civic ideal predominates, then a religious era, and then we return to the civic ideal."

"And here," said I, pointing to a copy of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, "is a civic ideal, built on the doctrine of selfishness."

"We have got beyond the selfish theory of morals. On that point, at least, all the ethical schools are agreed."

"Here is a nobler example Here is Descartes."

"Descartes had some peculiar ways of putting things. Take one point that is brought out in Croom Robertson's Lectures. You remember that the condemnation of Galileo had taken place not long before the publication of Descartes' treatises on physics; and he had to be circumspect in stating his theory of the earth's motion. So he asserted that, while the earth was indeed carried round the sun, it could correctly be described as being at rest in its orbit, since it preserved its position relatively to the particles of the vortex adjacent to it by which it was carried round!"

"Ingenious! He deserved to escape the claws of the Church."

"He only escaped with difficulty. From France he was obliged to remove to Holland, and even there the Protestant clergy harassed him."

"And behold! here is Leibnitz."

"Leibnitz," rejoined Mr. Whittaker, "represents one of the typical philosophies. He reduced the universe to an aggregate, or rather a hierarchy, of metaphysical atoms. Man's soul was one of these atoms or monads, arrived at self-consciousness. And God was the *Monas monadum*—the monad of monads."

"It reminds one of Bruno's speculations."

"True; we will not overlook Bruno. I was just lately reading some Catholic pamphlets which suggested that his statue in Rome ought to be treated as the heretic himself was treated. A heretic, the writers said, kills souls, and that is worse than killing the body."

I told Mr. Whittaker that, on examining the evidence as to Bruno's trial before the Inquisition, I was surprised to find how near he came to recantation.

"At Venice, you mean? Yes. But bear in mind that he held the doctrine of the double truth. This form of defence the Christian heretics learned from the Arabian philosophers. Mohammedanism, these doctors affirmed, was perfectly true in a theological sense, though the story of creation, *e.g.*, was philosophically false. You see, they had become acquainted with the Aristotelian teaching through Syriac translations, and that led them to reject the idea of creation out of nothing. So they maintained that, while all this theological system was useful as an ethical sanction to Mohammedans,



Jews, and Christians, they themselves were entitled to hold that the Supreme Being was a kind of pantheistic deity, from which descended a series of emanations. This conception they derived from Neo-Platonism. Of the individual soul they said that it was a sort of complex of the general human mind, and a particular material organism—thus interpreting Aristotle's doctrine of the soul in an original way. After death the impersonal soul, which is purely rational, remained, but all particular images of memory disappeared; there was, in fact, no personal immortality. And this doctrine, while philosophically true, was theologically false. So Averroës taught."

"Bruno, then, was an Averroist?"

"No; but he expounded the doctrine of double truth. He was therefore ready to conform to Protestant or Catholic ceremonies, even while doubting or denying the popular articles of belief in a trinity, incarnation, and so on. He had asserted, as a philosopher, that the infinite could not be comprehended in a finite person—personality and infinity being incompatible. That doctrine he recanted—theologically. Yet, in the end, he absolutely refused to withdraw from his positions philosophically."

"Our educated classes to-day," I observed, "also seem to take up a double position."

"Without at least one good reason that moved the philosophers; for, at the present day, we have liberty of opinion. And, after all, their disguise was so plainly avowed that, while it might, among hearers inclined to toleration, serve to protect, it could never conceal the heresy. Against the Inquisition, you see, it was unavailing."

"Blessed be toleration," I ejaculated.

"But mark," said Mr. Whittaker, "how modern toleration arose. Bruno and other philosophers, reasoning like Averroës, contended that the interests of the State did not require that all should think alike, so long as they conformed outwardly. And when the question had become ripe, Locke argued that the interest of the State did not even require that all its members should be nominally members of the same religious community. The State might safely allow the formation of sects distinct from the Established Church. So, as a matter of fact, our modern toleration has evolved out of that idea of philosophic freedom, and out of the

struggle of the sects—not out of the struggle of the sects alone, as is sometimes said.”

“And now,” I remarked, “Rationalism tolerated is slowly becoming Rationalism triumphant.”

“True,” replied Mr. Whittaker, “and we must take care that the religion of the future, whatever it may be, does not set up an ideal like that of Catholic orthodoxy. The individual and diverging modes of thought constituting philosophy must not be made a mere dependency of any social creed, even if this should be Rationalist in form. If there is ever a universal religion, perhaps the philosophers will need again something like the doctrine of the double truth—a cruder social and a more refined and speculative individual truth. Let us hope there will not again be Church Councils to condemn the distinction.”

I recoiled from the difficulty of gauging these remote possibilities, and, taking up a copy of Mr. Whittaker's *Essays and Notices*, I began to cross-examine the author on his views of the relation between the State and the individual. This led me to dilate on the fascinating individualism of Nietzsche, the strenuous prophet of self-assertion.

“Nietzsche,” responded Mr. Whittaker, “is not altogether unique. His idea is developed by Plato in the *Gorgias*. In that dialogue Callicles stigmatizes laws as a sort of conspiracy on the part of the feeble to prevent the strong man from exercising his native right to put forth his powers in every possible way, and especially for the subjugation of the rest.”

“Who was Mainländer?” I asked, my question being prompted by the title of one of the *Essays*.

“He wrote a curious book entitled *The Philosophy of Redemption*. He was a pessimist, and believed most men would voluntarily choose to die as soon as they had attained a condition of ease, and not before, because not till then could they realize that all is vanity. Most men are apt to blame circumstances for what is really the inevitable misery of life. So he advocated Socialism, that society might be comfortable—and die. He himself committed suicide.”

“That is as extraordinary as Nietzsche. The Social Democrats, I fancy, would hardly welcome such an auxiliary. But who,” I continued, as I turned over the leaves, and caught sight of a singular phrase, “are the people whom you call Agnostic Puritans?”

"They are people who say you cannot have a constructive metaphysics, and that you must not, for example, discuss whether the ultimate reality is a universal being or a multiplicity of individual beings, since your view must necessarily remain unverifiable."

"Is not Herbert Spencer an Agnostic Puritan?"

"No; his doctrine would be best described as a kind of pantheism, though he himself calls it Agnosticism. In any case, however, it is not typical Agnosticism."

"Will you name one of the Puritans?"

"From some of his statements, I should say Huxley. Yet not wholly. There is a remarkable passage at the end of his criticism of Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*, in which he says that it is more profitable to consider the many possibilities of things than to dogmatize about what exists—and that implies that there is a field of speculation for the metaphysician."

"And what is your own position on the greatest of problems?"

"I begin by postulating some sort of permanence in reality. But this permanent reality is of the nature of mind; for, as Berkeley proved, material substance regarded as something outside of all consciousness is a figment. You may, however, think of the reality in different ways. There is the monadic system, of which we were talking a little time since. You might also formulate a kind of Spinozism, in which Extension is no longer regarded as an attribute of God or Substance, co-ordinate with the attribute of Thought, but as merely a *form* of our phenomenal world, while Thought is the true and permanent reality. The individual soul would still be, as in Spinoza's system, a determination of universal intellect. According to both systems—this and the Leibnitzian monadology—mental reality is, as Spinoza said, in some sense eternal."

And so I came away from this instructive Chat, wondering whether, if Thought is permanent, guesses at the riddle of existence will also be eternal.

## MR. J. M. ROBERTSON.

I AM not a theologian. I am not a Christian. I am not a Tory. Hence, when I walked into Mr. Robertson's study, and looked round at the five thousand books which packed the shelves, I felt no fear of the dissecting-knife. Woe unto him whom the fates submit to that knife. For in drastic analysis, and ruthless acumen, and literary alertness, Mr. Robertson stands unsurpassed among present-day British critics. And, while his skill calls for admiration, his activity astonishes. Like the Tree of Life in Heaven, he produces fruit every month. The advanced periodicals constantly present the public with his articles on literature, on politics, theology, sociology. His books are frequent, yet not hasty. Their characteristics are conscientious workmanship and compact strength. He accomplishes much (let the theological metaphor pass) by the aid of the goddess of method. I could see her hand-work in the library. In one quarter were gathered the hosts of *Biography*—Luther, Bruno, Knox, Evelyn, Voltaire, Colbert, Paine, etc.; on their flank were ranged the regiments of *Science*—Darwin, Haeckel, Huxley, Weismann, and the rest; *Philosophy* appeared in the tomes of Spinoza, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Ueberweg, Schwegler, etc.; *Mythology* and *Religion* filled the heavy tiers with Preller, Daillé, R. P. Knight, the Church Fathers, the Church historians, etc.; and, like Nemesis, the Biblical critics brought up the rear; the *Classics*, mostly clad in leather, save for a shelf in vellum, presented a serried squadron under the captainship of Homer, Sophocles, and Virgil; *General English Literature* formed a splendidly equipped body of dramatists and essayists, and included the brilliant company of poets from Gower to William Morris. Opposite, the ranks of *History and Archæology* had fallen

in ; and next ensuing came a close-packed army of works on *Sociology*: By way of camp followers marched bands of French novels and other such lively miscellanea. The commander of the literary troops smoked cigarettes while he and I passed round in review.

But what an unhappy beginning ! I halted before Kidd's *Social Evolution*.

"The success of that book," said Mr. Robertson, "mainly represented the anxiety of the religious folk to get a new justification, in what looked like social science, for holding by views of which they knew they could make no straightforward defence. As a scientific treatise, however, it is worse than worthless."

When I passed on to Lester Ward's *Dynamic Sociology* —

"This book," observed Mr. Robertson, "is on the right line. It corrects the fatalism of Herbert Spencer by making sociology a living and not a dead science ; a science of possible action as well as of past growth. Spencer's sociological method rather resembles the anatomy of a dead body. He does not show how the body may change and work ; partly because he does not want it to work as many now-a-days propose. Lester Ward's title shows his different conception of the problem, which makes him the more fruitful sociologist of the two."

"But you are not ungrateful to Spencer?"

"Far from it. I got my first coherence and unity of thought from him ; and his whole system, whatever he may point to in sociology, makes for science and for the disintegration of religion, which is the great anti-scientific and anti-progressive force."

"Is Peschel's *Races of Man* of value now?"

"It has still some value as a general view, but needs revision at many points. Like all ethnological treatises of the last generation, it has to be re-written as regards Aryan origins. Peschel, by the way, was one of the most blundering of Buckle's critics. He so far misrepresented the case as to allege that Buckle traced the religion of the Indian races to the chemical constituents of their diet. What Buckle really did was to point out that the general food of the Hindus was such as could sustain a superabundant population, and so made for a certain kind of civilization.

He expressly declared that 'we can affirm nothing positively respecting the direct action of climate, food, and soil, in modifying individual character.'"

Mr. Robertson's knitted brows relaxed when we came to Tylor's *Anthropology*, which he pronounced to be an excellent manual. I suggested that the subject of this book ought to form the basis of every child's study of history; and we fell into a discussion on the question as to whether teachers should begin with the modern period and go backwards, or first take the primitive times and work forwards.

Mr. Robertson drew my attention to several all-but-forgotten Scotch sociologists, who foreshadowed the results of Darwin and Spencer. One was John Millar, who wrote *The Origin of the Distinction of Ranks*, a book dealing with the circumstances which give rise to the influence and authority of the various social orders. Another was James Dunbar, author of *Essays on the History of Mankind in Rude and Cultivated Ages*. Another was Gilbert Stuart, who sketched the progress of Europe from rudeness to refinement. A fourth was Adam Ferguson, who penned a *History of Civil Society*.

"After these men put out their ideas," remarked Mr. Robertson, "an absolute breach occurred in the development of the science. A new movement began with men like Hallam, who insisted on concrete historical fact and fought shy of general theories, especially about prehistoric times. And then Spencer took up the tale on evolutionary lines nearly a hundred years after the Scotch investigators."

If, like a true Scot, Mr. Robertson did justice to his eighteenth-century countrymen, he was equally ready to recognise the present-day researches of the French scholars.

"The French," he said, "have an International Institute of Sociology, which ought to lead to much. Nearly all their writers treat religion as a culture-phenomenon. Le Play, a Catholic, did indeed propose to reorganize society from a mediæval point of view. But the younger men are essentially Rationalistic. Some of the ablest of them follow on Marxian lines, and make economic conditions the key to the stages of social history. As a method among methods,

that is certainly the best, though it is possible to push the principle too far, or at least to apply it too narrowly. But," added Mr. Robertson, "there is one thing which very much hinders the progress of modern sociology."

"What is that?"

"The old notion that society is to be understood as an organism."

"But," I rejoined, "I find the conception a help in giving young people ideas of social duties."

"So you may. But in the case of Schäffle, for instance, the conception becomes a fixed obsession, and he works out the analogy of society with physiology in endless wearisome details, which convey neither knowledge nor suggestion. And the idea of an organism always tends to obscure the possibilities of structural change."

"What conception, then, would you prefer?"

"That of Ward, or that of Gumpłowicz, who describes civilization as a process. Sociology is a study of the mode in which things go."

I fancy I must have looked tired after we had travelled from volume to volume of a very learned Economic shelf, and Mr. Robertson whipped up my flagging attention by turning to the ever-readable *Physics and Politics*, of Bagehot.

"An admirable book?" I observed, with a note of interrogation.

"Well, yes ; interesting and suggestive ; very clever. It was said of Gladstone by Bagehot, you know, that he made a good political leader because to common opinions he joined an uncommon ability of exposition. Bagehot was not a man of common opinions. He picked the new and fresh ideas of his time, and handled them with independence. But"——

"Ah, why this *but*?"

"But this book does not go deep enough ; and I don't call it, at bottom, a good book. And even his work on the English Constitution, so often praised, is most disappointing. He radically mis-states some of the facts."

Of Del Mar's works on Money—as, for example, *The History of the Precious Metals* and *Money and Civilization*—Mr. Robertson spoke highly, and pointed out that this important topic, which threw valuable light on social

movements, had been neglected by nearly all sociologists. Indeed, it was their general defect to avoid economics. From this sober department we emerged into the poetic presence of Ruskin.

"What shall we say of Ruskin?"

"As an economist, he has said some intensely true things; but he has, on the other hand, shown intense impatience, and said grossly unreasonable and even scurrilous things of Ricardo and Adam Smith, for instance. He came to economics from the side of æsthetics and ethics, which no doubt accounts for his impatience of strictly economic methods, as well as for his freshness of insight."

"You accept his doctrine that wealth is life?"

"Yes, I accept that."

"But the economists generally do not?"

"You see, the term 'wealth' must often be used in a narrow technical sense, in order that economic argument may be carried on. I believe in technical economics, and think that some recent critics are very unjust to the technical writers. Nevertheless, I would have economics treated, not as a final body of knowledge, but as a certain technical study which enables the politician to be a sociologist. It must be used as a means to an end. The old economists, who worked out the laws of commerce and exchange, had the effect of encouraging readers to make the vicious assumption that the statement of how these operate amounted to a statement of how they *must* or *ought to* operate."

Before quitting the economic field, I gathered a little bouquet of appreciations. James Bonar, author of *Malthus and his Work*, Mr. Robertson described as doing all things well; Nicholson's *Principles of Political Economy* was an able treatise, though it was something of a mystery how such a student could be a bimetallist; and to John A. Hobson was paid the tribute that he was decidedly the best of our younger economists.

As Mr. Robertson talked, I could have imagined that he had forever pledged his soul to the service of economics. Yet he avowed with what keen interest he turned from one absorption to another, and how he had found refreshment in a study of the influence of Montaigne on Shakespeare before re-plunging into the intricacies of sociology.



And some readers, mayhap, will wonder that I could have chatted so long with a friend of Charles Bradlaugh without happening on the vital subject of Freethought. It may have been because I stumbled at the outset upon the political economists. But in due time we found our way to the noble phalanx of the sceptics.

I could not pass the works of F. C. Baur without a salutation.

"For Baur," said Mr. Robertson, "I have the highest respect. He was the greatest critic and student of Christian origins in his generation. I agree with Matthew Arnold in his general attack on German investigators for their blundering, splay-footed way of working. I think with him that, as a rule, their judgment is not trustworthy proportionately to their knowledge. But Baur, whom he impeaches with the rest, is one of the great exceptions. His judgment was, on the whole, admirable; and Arnold was not qualified to confute him."

With this I agreed; and we passed on to Strauss.

"His work was excellent so far as it went," was Mr. Robertson's verdict. "It was defective, however, in so far as he took for his basis only the Hebraic myths, and did not include Pagan material. His whole theory of the mythical nucleus of the Jesus-legend was too *a priori*. He tried to undo too many locks with one key. For all that, his method was a beautiful illustration of the scientific temper."

Let the younger readers note the praise as well as the caution; for Strauss ought not yet to go out of fashion.

"What is your opinion of Wellhausen?"

"One values him very highly for his lucidity. His work, however, only gave a transitional view, and did not represent a full development of Rationalistic thought as applied to the Jewish problem."

"What was the weak point?"

"I have often thought," replied Mr. Robertson, "that to write a history of the Jews one needs to combine the training of a Wellhausen with insight into the sociological and economic progress of the people."

"Will you give me an example?"

"Well, Mr. John Morley somewhere speaks of the Jews and the Greeks as lacking in the sovereign faculty of political

union. That verdict points to a defect in Mr. Morley's own seizure of the historical principle. The real explanation of the want of coherence among the Greeks was the peculiarly segregated character of their country. Their land was much broken up into glens; and their States were marked by a like dissociation."

"And you apply this principle to the Jews?"

"Certainly. As a race the Semites were capable enough of combination, or forcible unification. Witness the great Assyrian and Babylonian monarchies. But in Palestine, parted into a variety of surfaces, the Jews missed combination, as others would in similar circumstances."

We both joined in commendation of Schürer's *History of the Jewish People in the Time of Christ*; and Mr. Robertson spoke gratefully of the help received from this work when he was preparing his papers on *The Rise of Christianity*. The *Rise* was left unfinished at the passing-away of the *National Reformer*. I was glad to hear that, if the fates are propitious, the book will be resumed, and the first volume issued next year.

I pointed to a copy of Harnack's *History of Dogma*.

"A man of no originality; no speculative power whatever," was Mr. Robertson's curt comment; "but a good documentist. He has usefully edited a series of early Christian writings."

"Pray speak well of Kuenen."

"Very valuable indeed; though, relatively to Wellhausen, his *History* is formless. The *Hexateuch* is the best sample of his skill and method."

The next step brought us to Tiele's *History of Religion*.

"I esteem Tiele greatly; so much so that, in order to study his essay on Christ and Krishna, I took the trouble to learn Dutch. But," added Mr. Robertson with a smile, "I have since forgotten it all."

"Let us take a few Frenchmen; Réville, for instance."

"Hm! Interesting—intelligent"—

"Perhaps you think better of Havet and his *Christianisme et ses Origines*."

"Decidedly; he deserves translation. A capable scholar was Havet; and his, by the way, is the best popular edition of Pascal's *Pensées*."

Half dubiously I named the name of Renan.

"The trouble is that, with all his knowledge and all his literary gift, his work must all be done over again. His very amenity turned to a kind of frivolity. I consider his *History of the People of Israel* in particular very disappointing. He reminds me of Molière's Mascarille, who had 'set to work to turn the whole of Roman history into madrigals.' Renan, in a way, did that with Hebrew history. But his series on Christian origins has great defects also. You can get the most absolutely opposite doctrines from him on points of vital detail; and, as regards his treatment of the central problem, I still think of him as I did when I wrote that 'He impressed reasoning men on neither side. The orthodox saw that, believing what he did, he had no valid reason for not believing more. The scientific men saw that, rejecting what he did, he had no valid plea for not rejecting more.'"

I sighed. Renan charms us all. Nevertheless, he deserves Mr. Robertson's censure.

A book new to me was Pierre Larroque's *L'Esclavage chez les Nations Chrétiennes*—(Slavery among Christian Nations).

"This writer," said Mr. Robertson, with an emphasis that made me feel guilty, "was one of the Freethinkers who began by classing Christianity as one of the strictly beneficent forces in history. But the more Larroque studied, the more he was driven to admit that Christianity practically counted for nothing in social progress."

"I fear I shall tire you out with my cross-examination. But may I take a few more typical books? Here is *Supernatural Religion*."

"Excellent. Lightfoot's attack on it quite failed in all essentials. You remember Pfleiderer, who is fairly impartial, pronounces that the Bishop was unqualified to meet this line of criticism."

"I like this work—Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*."

"Ah, but," protested Mr. Robertson, "he exasperates me by trying as he does to make out that, in spite of critical results, Biblical inspiration still stands."

"As to Robertson Smith?"

"A very remarkable man," was the answer. "Yet it was curious that, while his mind worked so scientifically in his

*Religion of the Semites*, he was always a supernaturalist in relation to Christianity. The amazing thing was that, in his researches into the subject of human sacrifices, he did not perceive the important light thereby thrown on the legend and doctrine of the sacrifice of Jesus."

From this point our conversation drifted round to the philosophers and moralists. Naturally, we encountered Hume.

"I find him the most highly-endowed of all in penetrating power," remarked Mr. Robertson. "But how singular it is that the most fundamental of his principles was mis-stated in the text of his *Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, and corrected only in a note. The note points out that it is wrong to distinguish between reason and experience. No gap lies between them. Talking of Hume," added Mr. Robertson, "I once asked an Edinburgh bookseller what a first edition of any of Hume's books was worth, and he said 'Nothing.' Such is Scotland's appreciation. They will give anyone a statue before Hume. Even Adam Smith is without a statue in Edinburgh. He was a Deist, you remember."

I tried to overawe Mr. Robertson's empirical pride by talking learnedly of Kant and Hegel and those splendid sons of the mist—the tribe of metaphysicians. It availed naught. Kant's ethical doctrine was but "a hollow shell," needing to be filled out with the lessons of sociology.

"As to Hegel," continued Mr. Robertson, "and his doctrine of the Absolute Spirit realizing itself in history, and so on, I admit the power of the man's speculative reason, but I have an intense aversion to his wayward obscurity. I sympathize with Carlyle's protest, on reading Hegel, that he had 'travelled the road many a good time, but never before with a cannon ball chained to each ankle.'"

"But," objected I, "must we not at last always fall back on metaphysic?"

"Oh, yes," assented Mr. Robertson, drily, "always—if only in order to refute the metaphysicians!"

I escaped to the topic of Stuart Mill, and Mr. Robertson, while extolling his intellectual amenity and purity and concern for justice, scathingly condemned the "limited-liability God" of the celebrated *Essay on Theism*. To Comte the tribute was but scant. For Henry Thomas

Buckle the stream of admiration ran with a more full and enthusiastic flow. Buckle had his failings ; he leaned over-much to *laissez-faire*. But it was difficult to exaggerate his value as an illuminator of human history. He had done for history, in a manner, what Spencer had done for cosmology.

Mighty is the clang of Mr. Robertson's hammer when it descends on illogical methods and obscurantist tenets. But he also can worship heroes, and bring the offering of flowers.

